

**SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN IRAN AND THE TRENDS OF *POLITICAL  
EXPRESSIONISM***

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ICTs, Human Rights, Social Change.

### **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to all the heroic individuals who suffered and died during *18 Tir* and the *Green Movement* because of their beliefs in secular democracy and freedom for the people of Iran. This research intends to honor their sacrifices to make way for a better future; not only in Iran, but also in the Middle East and the world.

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### Abstract

The 2009 *Green Movement* in Iran attracted global attention as a new kind of social movement in which for the first time in the 21st century, millions of people risked their lives in peaceful protests to replace a oppressive theocratic regime. Afterward, the numbers of activists in other movements worldwide reached peaks from thousands to millions. Increased usage of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and their impact on Traditional Communication Methods (TCMs) transformed the nature of contention, entering an age of redefining the conceptualization of space defined as *Political Expressionism*, abstract like the age of expressionism in art. Two questions about the *Green Movement* framed this dissertation: “What is the Iranian dream for change, its achievements, and what will be in store for the next chapter of social movements in Iran?” and “What impact did ICTs have on the conceptualization of space in state and society?”

Relevant theories were contrasted to analyze the evolution of social movements. A historical overview of social movements in Iran revealed a shift from TCMs to ICTs by contrasting *18 Tir* (the peaceful July 1999 student uprising) with the *Green Movement*, both movements being significant for their respective times and considering their similarities and differences. A discussion of ICTs alongside a literature review evaluated their relatedness to newer social movements: the *Arab Spring*, *Taksim Square (Gezi Park) Movement*, *Umbrella Revolution*, and the Bahraini and Syrian uprisings. Surveys and interviews of Iranian nationals and both former and current activists from different hierarchies within the *Green Movement* and *18 Tir* worldwide shaped the scope of this research to highlight key trends. This study aims to bridge knowledge gaps between the theory and practice of social movements for academics and human rights activists alike.

*Keywords: Social Movements, Activism, Censorship, Resistance, Middle East, Nonviolent tactics, Intergenerational Expression, ICTs, Human Rights, Social Change.*

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### ***ABBREVIATIONS***

***ICTs*** = Information Communication Technologies

***TCMs*** = Traditional Communication Methods

### ***ORIGINAL KEY TERMS***

#### ***Political Expressionism:***

*Many traditional communication methods became outmoded by newer, faster, and more affordable technologies post-1999 and the Battle in Seattle Social Movement, leading to the widespread increase in the usage of ICTs and transforming the conceptualization of space. In this era, people's concept of the spaces they use to communicate goes beyond the print-based hegemony leading to a multitude of ways where people can express themselves.*

#### ***Co-Optive Expressionism:***

*When a social movement utilizes a government approved event to hold impromptu protests and demonstrations.*

#### ***Meydan Expressionism:***

*When a public space is taken over by activists continuously and in a vocal manner, camping out at the location and remaining there 24 hours a day.*

#### ***Intergenerational Expression:***

*The peak of a struggle spanning generations which manifests in recent times predominantly taking place among but not exclusively the youth.*

#### ***Digital Content Temporality:***

*The world wide web by no means is a place of permanent storage of any particular form of information and at any time runs the risk of becoming lost or deleted over the course of time whether it be for a few seconds or several years.*

### **KEY TERMS**

**Heterotopia:**

*A space in-between the physical world and the reality which we cannot experience with our five senses (Foucault).*

**Rhizome:**

*Following the theory of Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, a cultural phenomena can spread in a non-linear fashion, similar to the Rhizomes of plants.*

**Politics of Fun / Carnavalesque Chaos:** *Asef Bayat and Ömer Şener's terms share the common definition of people using fun as a form of defiance against an existing order, or in the cases of Iran and Turkey, protesting against the government.*

**Volatility-** *The increased likelihood a social movement may be dissolved or take a violent turn.*

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Why the *Green Movement* is Different

Public distrust in governments worldwide has continued to decline over the past four decades.<sup>1</sup> This factor coupled with socio-political and economic pressures has led to an increase in manifestations of resistance on a more massive and global scale. People's daily lives have been transformed through the transition from *Traditional Communication Methods* (TCMs) to increased dependence on *Internet Communication Technologies* (ICTs). Behind the closed doors of oppressive regimes, the World Wide Web has enabled activists with the tools to mobilize by the millions. Consequently, the nature of politics and social movements have changed in unimaginable and unforgettable ways. This created a transition into an age of what I would name *Political Expressionism* upon the widespread adoption of ICTs changing how people interact with each other across various spaces. The traditional ways of forecasting socio-political trajectories in turn are not adequate enough because of the exponential rise in the usage of ICTs worldwide. With reference to space, when print-based communications were dominant and heavily monopolized there were two major problems: the cost and availability of the devices. ICTs broke that barrier as the internet became almost as abundant as water and in many places freely available. Due to the internet's widespread availability, the issue of cost and access to various communication methods is no longer a hindrance as in the past. As a consequence, now there exists an overabundance of information published online and many venues through which people can communicate. In the *Political Expressionist Age* politics take on a new form in which

<sup>1</sup> Drew Desilver, "Confidence in Government Falls in Much of the Developed World," *Pew Research Center* last modified November 21, 2013, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/11/21/confidence-in-government-falls-in-much-of-the-developed-world/>.

information, especially during social movements, often gets transmitted by any means necessary and in unprecedented ways. For purposes of this research, the level of Political Expressionism present in a social movement in turn impacts how it can be studied. A social movement predominantly based on TCMs was analyzed in a different way compared to a social movement which depended greatly on ICTS. This era signals an end to the near absolute monopolies on the media worldwide, where information is transmitted and how people access those transmissions is changing at a pace much faster than analysts and researchers are able to keep pace. *Political Expressionism* runs along a continuum where if the usage of ICTs is greater than TCMs, a social movement will fall under the category of *Political Expressionism* to varying degrees (ICTs > TCMs = *Political Expressionist* Social Movement). This trend is similar to the rise of photography which outmoded traditional ways of creating art, leading to the expressionist era and filled with countless innovations in the field.

*Political Expressionism* likely begins with the 1999 Battle in Seattle in the U.S state of Washington, Otpor! Organization in Serbia with the overthrow of Milosevic on October 5, 2000, and the *Orange Revolution* which accomplished Constitutional Reform in Ukraine in 2004. Those three social movements began to introduce the usage of ICTs or frameworks to be supported by the mass adoption of ICTs. ICTs became more widespread, and the *Green Movement* in Iran took advantage of those resources in 2009, then the *Arab Spring* in 2010, *Taksim/Gezi Park Movement* in Turkey in 2013 and *Umbrella Movement* in Hong Kong in 2014, among others. These are examples of growing global frustration with political regimes seen as increasingly out of touch with the struggles of the people they govern. This research aims to bridge the gap of understanding between academics and activists regarding social movements

and expects to determine the general placement of the *Green Movement* within the continuum of *Political Expressionism*. Two questions were used to help establish a better understanding of the *Green Movement* on a socio-political level and how ICTs impacted its development: “What is the Iranian dream for change, its achievements, and what will be in store for the next chapter of social movements in Iran?” and “What impact did ICTs have on the conceptualization of space in state and society?” The vast scope of the *Green Movement* both in terms of its history and usage of ICTs could exemplify the modern shift of social movements toward *Political Expressionism* and establish a theoretical framework open for future research collaborations. ICTs are becoming more volatile as a medium post-*Green Movement* because of much larger user bases, which in turn leads to content being filtered through the use of algorithms to prevent a chaotic, confusing jumble of information reaching the public. Depending on who controls and develops the algorithms in turn will affect how information reaches users, opening the door to new kinds of censorship. Another factor to consider is large websites shutting down abruptly, such as the famed GeoCities web page during the 1990s; bought out by Yahoo in 1999 in the hopes of making a profit, it was then removed from the Internet because it was not in their economic interest to maintain the website. The relationships between ICTs, state and society are explored to better understand the developing impacts and their consequences. One aspect in particular, which is not often discussed, arises from these two problems in what I call *Digital Content Temporality*. In effect there is no guarantee anything posted online will remain forever, as the World Wide Web’s landscape is under constant change; with great gains come major losses whether to censorship, business decisions, algorithms, removal, and other factors.

The 2009 *Green Movement* in Iran brought about a broad resistance against politically repressive conditions under the current regime, the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was among the earliest massive social movements of this kind in the 21st century through its combined usage of ICTs and TCMs. When the *Green Movement* entered the political arena of Iran as a nonviolent political protest, disputing the result of the unfair presidential elections, it coalesced into a social movement that garnered attention not only within the nation but also across the globe, with millions of activists taking to the city squares in a matter of hours and days. The term ‘nonviolent’ used in this context refers to the characteristic that may consist of ideas or motivations for progressive change to replace a government but without the use of weaponry nor force as retaliation against the government. Such manifestations in city squares with 24-hour continuous and vocal protests is what I call *Meydan Expressionism* (Meydan in Farsi means city square).

According to an estimate by the then-mayor of Tehran, around 3 million Iranians demonstrated in that city alone.<sup>2</sup> This is a conservative estimate, not inclusive of other major cities, towns, and rural areas in Iran. Iranian civilians were long seen as cowed by this theocratic and totalitarian regime but as of 2009 had the courage to assemble in massive, unforeseen numbers protesting against the regime’s corrupt handling of the electoral process. This rapid rise in number came as a surprise both inside and outside of Iran, redefining the world’s understanding of what comprises a social movement. A new bar was set for the upper limits a

<sup>2</sup> Nazila Fathi and Michael Slackman, “As Confrontation Deepens, Iran's Path Is Unclear” *New York Times*. Last modified June 18, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/19/world/middleeast/19iran.html>.

social movement can reach after the *Green Movement* and for the roles ICTs began to play in people's daily lives.

What set the *Green Movement* apart from previous *Political Expressionist* social movements is that Iranians endured almost a century of longing for a government that would best represent them, coupled with the fact that this regime is and has been a totalitarian theocracy, extremely brutal in its methods of suppression. The *Green Movement* demonstrated the possibility for widespread resistance to repression even under the most dangerous conditions. For the most part there lacks a significant amount of concrete information about the *Green Movement* and previous social movements in Iran. An analysis was conducted on select aspects of classical and contemporary social movement theory inclusive of material dealing with the conceptualization of space to measure how social movements can be related to one another through the roles of ICTs.

Different sources of information were then synthesized, starting with a historical overview of the *Green Movement* contrasted with material collected through a comparative literature review and key trends from surveys and interviews, with the aim to better understand the dynamics at play. It is important to analyze the *Green Movement* from several perspectives. Its composition and such massive numbers did not develop overnight and formed from mounting discontentment dating at least as far back as the 1905 Constitutional Revolution (Mashrūtiyyat Revolution). There is a strong historical basis for an ongoing continuous contention among civilians in Iran. Unfortunately, unlike later social movements in Iran, the Mashrūtiyyat revolution that ended in 1911 did involve elements of violence at different stages.

Future protests organized by the people of Iran however, were accomplished by contention through peaceful means, shaping the culture of resistance in the years to follow. Since then, several nonviolent social movements organized by the public have arisen in Iran, including the 1952 (Persian Calendar: 30 Tir. 1331) protests to bring Mossadegh back in power, and the December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1953 protests (Persian Calendar: 16 Azar. 1332), in which three students were killed while Tehran University students demonstrated to support Mossadegh during U.S Vice President Nixon's visit to Iran, which led to the creation of student's day in Iran to commemorate them. Additionally, *18 Tir*, known as the July 1999 student uprising for the freedom of Iran, exercised political expression against brutal actions of the regime, resulting in the government militia killing students in the dormitories of Tehran University. Ten years later, the *Green Movement* of 2009 rose up against fraudulent elections instituted by the supreme leader of Iran that placed Ahmedinejad in power. All these social movements reveal an underlying desire for revolutionary change with the objective of secular democratization based on human rights principles.

The only exception to this trend is the 1979 revolution, partly caused by the establishment of a dictatorship following the 1953 coup that ousted the democratically elected Prime Minister Mossadegh. This revolution was fueled in large part by the people's desire to depose the Shah from power and to democratize Iran. However, a radical intervention led by Khomeini, who at the time was exiled in France, manipulated those desires to place himself in power. People were convinced into thinking that under his rule they would have political freedom and freedom of expression, persuading everyone from leftists to nationalists and liberalists. Upon Khomeini taking power, he rescinded his promises and implemented extremist theocratic rule of Iran based



on the concept of a supreme leader (*velayat faghih*). The 1979 revolution, destabilization, and dissemination of radical rhetoric not only occurred within the borders of Iran but impacted the rest of the Middle East to varying degrees. Iran and subsequently the rest of the Middle East went down a dangerous path, diminishing citizens' hope for secular democracies in the region. Socio-economic developments which took place during the Shah's time began to take a downward turn under rule of the Islamic Republic, negatively affecting people's daily lives in numerous and unimaginable ways.

Although Iran used to be at the center of different types of trade and was a key socio-economic player in the Middle East, now under the control of a corrupt and ruthless government it became very difficult to regain that level of development. This was not the first time that events within the borders of Iran spread to other parts of the world. When Mossadegh proposed nationalizing oil in Iran, a few years later, Egypt followed a similar path with the Suez Canal.<sup>3</sup> Such level of influence on the region was referred to as "Mossadeghism", reflecting the rise in anti-colonial sentiment not only in Iran but the region.<sup>4</sup> This indicates that there is a case for the *Green Movement* and how it attracted international attention, and how components, strategies, or concepts could spread like rhizomes.<sup>5</sup> Despite the outrageous ousting of Mossadegh, it is clear that the culture of resistance established in Iran, focused on defending the people's rights and rooted in over a century of historical precedent, would not be quelled so easily. In this way, despite the *Green Movement* not removing the Islamic Republic of Iran from power, it will not

<sup>3</sup> Ebrahim Norouzi and Arash Norouzi, "Mossadegh in Egypt A Hero's Welcome" last modified February 18, 2011, <http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography/egypt/>. <sup>4</sup> Norouzi and Norouzi.

<sup>4</sup> Norouzi and Norouzi.

<sup>5</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1988), 25.

be the last massive expression of contention in Iran with the goal to take power away from the current regime.

There likely will never be an all-encompassing understanding of the nature behind social movements in socio-political theory. The *Green Movement* however proves to be a strong contender as a comprehensive model in the Political Expressionist Age because of how it broke established norms of what a social movement is supposed to be and expanded the limits of the capacities for change. At the same time, their unique usage of a public square for contention caused protesters to recede at night and not remain like in social movements which employ *Meydan Expressionism*. Traditional notions of political theory were likely shaken by the onset of this type of social movement in part because there still exists a fair amount of debate over the exact role of ICTs. There are tendencies of either too much emphasis on the role of ICTs and their relationship to Social Movements, or not enough. I postulate the *Green Movement* was the first major social movement of its kind to gain a massive following by the millions in the Political Expressionist Age in part through ICTs and their interaction with TCMs.

The classical definition of social movements by Lorenz von Stein is suitable for this study because he examined their nature to bring about equalization between the oppressed and their oppressors through reform or revolution.<sup>6</sup> He was considered the first theorist to coin this term and make it widespread thereby supplanting the previous, more common term, revolution, typically characterized in a negative context by many.<sup>7</sup> The concept of social movements helped allow for a better understanding of people's struggle for change from a more neutral perspective,

<sup>6</sup> Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Watson Fowler and Francis George Fowler, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford University Press, 1912).

without being prejudiced by images of violence and incitement. von Stein did not, however, go into detail about repression and radical intervention as ways in which social movements can become disrupted by external or internal forces. In effect, there are two pairs of dynamics that shape the course of social movements: in a positive direction via reform and/or revolution, or a negative direction under repression and/or radical intervention.

In re-evaluating the concept at a more contemporary level, the theories of Charles Tilly, and Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald were among the first to provide a working model in which social movements can be studied. They laid out different components such as a central focal point, organization, and mediation.<sup>89</sup> Their models are, firstly, not that different from each other, and secondly, the concept of space appears to be glossed over and not discussed in enough detail. An example of an issue that can arise through the application of that model to the analysis of social movements is when comparing *18 Tir* to the *Green Movement*. By their definition, the two social movements shared common areas of interest, organization, and mediation. However, the key difference between the two movements arises in the way space is conceptualized, ICTs being the major contender for why the *Green Movement* could become much more massive over a shorter period.

Two major questions were considered in interpreting the significance of the *Green Movement*: “What is the Iranian dream for change, its achievements, and what will be in store for the next chapter of social movements in Iran?” and “What impact did Information

<sup>8</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768-2004*, vol. 3 (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 3-4.

Communication Technologies (ICTs) have on the conceptualization of space in state and society?" The *Green Movement* appears to have led to an unexpected set of mixed results; despite failing to remove the Islamic Republic of Iran from power through peaceful revolution, it led to provoking new forms of resistance against government repression and radical interventions.

This study expects to contribute a new fold into the contemporary social movement model by looking at the conceptualization of space in more depth. A major component in the age of *Political Expressionism* is the way activists perceive and interact with space, often shaped by the rapid influx of ICTs into people's daily lives. This tool likely played an important role in how the *Green Movement* was able to reach a peak never before seen nor imagined possible in recent history because of its capacity to mobilize its adherents by the millions. It challenged the very core of people's understanding of how this phenomenon operates among academics and activists alike. The conceptualization of space here was used to better understand these subtleties within the social movements that followed.

Although conceptualization of space is not exclusive to the usage of ICTs, it helps provide an analytical framework to measure different areas that indicate potential strengths and weaknesses in the overall cohesiveness of a social movement. Specifically, this concept covers five dimensions: symbolism, location, capacity to spread, perception of space, and thresholds of resistance. The objective for establishing these dimensions is for future research to avoid theoretical redundancy by taking note of existing overlaps and acknowledging the collective effort towards reaching a more sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of social movements. Each category of interpretation is compared to specific theories to help visualize and

understand the socio-political effects that result. People's conceptualization of space was studied as a frame of reference in the process of directing this research in addition to constructing the surveys and interviews.

Symbolism was interpreted through the general concept of semiotics. When participants and observers begin to associate certain images or language with a social movement, it gains strength because of the type of imprint it can leave. The concept of Semiotics in part is important as the expression of symbols takes on new forms with the widespread adoption of ICTs. Although not as prevalent in this postmodernist age and the shift away from structuralism, semiotics can still bring up important points for analysis of any social movement. With information being transmitted faster and technology becoming more advanced, numerous new avenues present themselves in which users can express ideas through symbols. Those symbols in turn share a role in driving social movements forward in different ways. Something as simple as a color can be very significant for a social movement.

Location was analyzed through the application of Michel Foucault's concept of Heterotopia. This is an example of how ideologies or concepts within a social movement can exist not within the continuum of physical space and imaginary space, but rather somewhere in between.<sup>10</sup> Space becomes subjective, where people choose to meet and how they meet becomes increasingly dependent on the mediums that facilitate that process. With ICTs becoming an increasingly dominant part of our daily lives, the ways people organize and mobilize is changing. Where people choose to connect, whether in person, online, or a combination of both, are factors to consider in modern social movements.

<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec. "Of other spaces." *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22-27.

A social movement's capacity to spread can be influenced by rhizomatic transformations, according to Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze's theory concerning cultural phenomena. They stipulated that like the rhizome of a plant, a cultural phenomenon reproduces itself by spreading across different areas in a non-linear manner.<sup>11</sup> No longer are people restricted to state media as in the past. ICTs allow people to observe and learn from each other at an almost simultaneous level. What this means for the and the social movements that followed was that similar behaviors and trends unfolded, with an unprecedented turnout of protesters and the attraction of global attention. Perception is important for considering how the protesters experience the process of participation. Related to this matter is the theory of Lacanian Gaze, in which a person experiences the sensation of watching and being watched.<sup>12</sup> With increased freedom there is also a rise in state vigilance over civilians that ought to be considered. The state's monopoly on the media and its capacity to exercise control over censorship and its civilians always takes on new forms. There is a tenuous relationship between state oppression and innovative resistance, and the two are at constant odds with the state trying to find new ways to subvert dissidence, and activists seeking different avenues to be heard. The sense of security in a social movement and vision of oneself are interrelated. Motivation depends on how an individual is positioned within the larger scope of an entire movement. In the aggregate, this micro shift in behavior leads to macro level consequences. The successive nature of multiple movements in recent years consisting of a similar scale and manner of organization seems to indicate people are starting to see their place in social movements in ways different to times past.

<sup>11</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1988), 25.

<sup>12</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan. (New York: Norton, 1978), 72.

The threshold of resistance within a social movement is important toward understanding when actions are considered contentious or not. Under the ‘Politics of Fun’ by Asef Bayat, his work illustrates how contention can take creative forms outside the scope of more traditional strategies. Bayat based his reasoning on the extreme theocratic values of the Islamic Republic of Iran turning almost all forms of recreation into contention out of fear it will weaken the establishment and its principles.<sup>13</sup> There is similar theory that developed in an analysis of the Taksim movement in Turkey following a similar concept *Carnivalesque Chaos* by Ömer Şener, a political theorist in Turkey, who applied the concept of Carnival by a Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (circa 1971) to social movements in which people effectively use what amounts to forms of recreation, such as humor, to resist the status quo.<sup>14</sup> By acknowledging that recreation can be resistance, it reframes the generic understanding of political uprisings by ushering in a new perspective. Three authors have already discussed this dimension, suggesting that it is a rising trend given the increase in attention. This concept is significant, as what may be viewed as recreation in one nation could be seen as illegal, revolutionary contention in another.

These five dimensions helped guide this study in gathering the appropriate information, both to analyze the *Green Movement* and the social movements that followed. These conceptualizations of space will vary to different degrees. There may never be a complete definition and understanding of how a social movement operates, but in understanding internal forces the external aspects become less elusive and more approachable. This research attempted to be neither too broad nor too narrow, with a framework that combined structuralist and post-

<sup>13</sup> Asef Bayat. *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford University Press, 2013), 139.

<sup>14</sup> Bülent Gökay and Ilia Xypolia, “Reflections on Taksim-Gezi Park Protests in Turkey,” *Keele European Research Centre*, (2013): 40.

modernist thought to provide the most comprehensive possible scope. Inclusion of the conceptualization of space helped highlight the varying strengths and weaknesses of social movements and the roles ICTs play in their development. Changes in society's conceptualization of space have left a big impact on how people socialize and, in turn, how they are able to make use of their communicative networks under different conditions.

In the *Green Movement*, ICT usage was much more widespread compared to the social movements that preceded it. Previous uses of ICTs depended mostly on services which were less popular and interactive, such as e-mail or chat applications such as Internet Relay Chat (IRC), used during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. The types of web pages used by the *Green Movement* were more interactive, personal and widespread compared to services in years past. Therefore, the rate at which people were able to mobilize and organize differed drastically from previous events, in large part because of ICTs. This, in conjunction with the use of TCMs, allowed for an unprecedented number of participants to join and interact in new ways.

The *Green Movement* offered a viable path for its participants that led to global and regional implications in regard to its sustainability, stability, durability of values, and its capacity for social change. The *18 Tir July 1999* uprising helped provide the foundational framework for the *Green Movement*. The *Green Movement* and *18 Tir* were about 10 years apart with both sharing the similar goals, except for some tactical differences which lead to the *Green Movement* mobilizing in far more massive numbers and with broader appeal. Knowledge about this previous movement helps highlight shifts in mobilization-methods and re-conceptualization of public space in Iran over time. Differences between these two movements will be discussed in



more detail in Chapter 3 to analyze the exponential rise in the number of participants and its potential relationship to the usage of ICTs.

The historical drive for what shall be labeled *Intergenerational Expression* can be traced as far back as 1905. This factor is a unique aspect of the *Green Movement*, in which public frustration built up over the course of a century, becoming more and more pronounced with the passing of time and increased levels of abuse under the current regime. ICTs alone are not what makes a social movement transform but are the driving forces behind that transformation. It is how the participants perform using this tool that has led to millions of people taking to the streets. One fact, which cannot be disputed, is that “Youth is the largest population bloc in Iran. More than two thirds of Iran's population totaling at 73 million people were younger than 30 in 2009”.<sup>15</sup> This research looks beyond potential communications determinism to measure how the *Green Movement* picked up enough momentum to nearly topple the current regime of Iran and how it compared to major social movements that followed in the Middle East and Asia.

The *Green Movement's* future depends on many factors: social and economic circumstances, the composition types of participants, being more inclusive of the working class and those from rural areas. It seems social movements employing the usage of ICT's are capable of reaching very broad audiences within short periods of time, ranging from hundreds of thousands of participants to millions after the *Green Movement* in 2009. More importantly than the number of participants is the potential to reach key members and attract global attention within a fraction of the time possible during the era of TCMs. An example would be the way the

<sup>15</sup> "Youth Could Sway the Vote in Iran Election." *Euronews* online. Last modified December 6, 2009. <http://www.euronews2-direct.bce.lu/2009/06/12/youth-could-sway-the-vote-in-iran-election>.

OTPOR! Movement in Serbia accomplished its goal of ousting Milosevic in 2000.<sup>16</sup> This hints at the potential to influence other social movements in the world by demonstrating; it is possible to reach such a magnitude of communicative capacities. *OTPOR!* was seen in Egypt as an example for the *April 6 Movement* to follow, as they too accomplished a successful overthrow; however, other factors such as a lack of a strong political plan after the removal led the subsequent hijacking of Egypt's government by the Muslim Brotherhood and, later, the Egyptian Military. It is clear the world wide web can prove to be a powerful space to mobilize, but at the same time it is the quality of the composition itself and the cohesiveness of its vision which will enable success after an unwanted government loses control.

The discussion of *18 Tir*, the social movement immediately preceding the *Green Movement*, helped provide context and guide discussion on the multifaceted nature of Social Movements based on *Political Expressionism* and how a unique balance between TCMs and ICTs in the *Green Movement* led to its massive expansion. Previous Social Movements based on *Political Expressionism* by utilizing ICTs, such as the *Battle of Seattle* in Washington state and the *Orange Revolution* in Ukraine, did not manage to attract as large of a participant base. Numbers alone are not a measure of success but are an important factor to consider in being able to direct the intentions of a social movement. The *Green Movement's* legacy may have served and likely will serve as a source of influence for future social movements in the world in its ability to mobilize large numbers of people over short periods of time.

The complex nature of *Political Expressionism* is an important focal point as it remains an uncharted territory in the field of both social and political science. With each new type of

<sup>16</sup>Mark Engler and Paul Engler, *This is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt is Shaping the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Nation Books, 2016).

communication method, a new layer of interaction unfolds, creating reverberations throughout society on multiple levels. Interactions between old and new technologies often lead to unexpected results. What used to be a linear form of technological progression, starting with the printing press up through the advent of the telephone and the television, the World Wide Web completely shook the foundations of how people perceive themselves and each other. The relationship between state and society, in particular urban areas of society, changed in immeasurable ways. A letter, which once took months just to travel between a one town and another, can now go global in milliseconds.

Despite the many innovations, the *Green Movement* lost a lot of momentum after reaching its peak in 2009. The Islamic Republic of Iran has made certain reforms to placate citizens so participants do not become as frustrated as when the movement was in full force back in 2009. However, even years later, a unique phenomenon has been taking place, involving what I would consider *Co-Optive Expressionism* of other unrelated (but government permitted) protest or event as a means to advance the *Green Movement's* cause. *Co-Optive Expressionism* is a sign that the *Green Movement* continues to remain active in people's minds. The aforementioned development illustrates how space and its conceptualization is of increasing importance, because when a social movement appears to end, it may just be dormant, waiting for the appropriate moment to recapture the public eye.

The current economic conditions and their deteriorating nature may be a contributing factor toward rekindling the progressive desire for change in Iran to remove the current regime. The realm of politics is no longer the same from one day to the next; now at any time citizens can break important news to the world sooner than most journalists, and with more methods to

bypass censorship. The fact that the *Green Movement* was able to garner a large following within a short period of time while attracting national and international attention demonstrates how much there is to be learned about social movements in the age of *Political Expressionism* than previously established in academia.

When evaluating the value of ICTs, it is worth considering how integrated they became as a part of society; nearly eighty percent of traffic directed at YouTube comes from outside the United States with around 300 hours of video uploaded every minute.<sup>17</sup> This is around three times as much compared to 2014 where 100 hours of video was uploaded per minute.<sup>18</sup> Facebook.com's user base consists of a large proportion of the world's population, approximating 1.32 billion active daily members and 2 billion monthly active members as of June 2017<sup>19</sup>. Of these active members, 85.8% are from outside the United States.<sup>20</sup> This suggests a steady rise in users, with higher popularity among monthly users. The Internet's use as a method for communication created a new frontier, with platforms like Facebook having a user base larger than most small nations or territories. This means there is a lot of responsibility attached to the people who run these platforms and have access to user's personal data.

There is also the question of which methods shall prevail in the long run. There are at least 320 million active monthly users on Twitter as of March 2016 and 313 million in April

<sup>17</sup> "Hours of Video Uploaded to YouTube Every Minute as of July 2015," *Statistica*, last modified January 1, 2018. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/259477/hours-of-video-uploaded-to-youtube-every-minute/>.

<sup>18</sup> Shea Bennett, "Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Vine, Snapchat—Social Media Stats 2014 [INFOGRAPHIC]" last modified June 9, 2014. <http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/social-media-statistics-2014/499230>

<sup>19</sup> "Facebook Newsroom". *Company Info | Facebook Newsroom* online, last modified June 11, 2017, <http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts>.

<sup>20</sup> "Facebook Newsroom," *Company Info | Facebook Newsroom*, last modified April 29, 2017, <http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts>.

2017, with 82% of active users logging in from their mobile devices and 79% of the accounts based outside the United States.<sup>21</sup> Twitter seems to be reaching a somewhat stagnant number given its inception in 2006, versus Instagram, founded in 2010, its user base rising to 400 million per month by September 2015.<sup>22</sup> As of April 2017, the number of monthly active users became 700 million per month<sup>23</sup>. It remains uncertain at this time whether Twitter will remain a strong resource for future social movements in the world. One of the major issues is the site's trademark quality of transmitting instantaneous information being affected by algorithms that determine the order at which information is made visible to other users.<sup>24</sup> This means, the same twitter feed will have a different order of publications depending on the user.<sup>25</sup> As a result, this feature can, in theory, effectively destroy the "live" quality that made this ICT product world-renowned. The problem with this type of change is that it creates a space for de facto censorship to be possible, in which almost any communication could be redirected under numerous pretexts. For example, should an emergency arise, information may not reach all users in an equal and appropriate manner. Yet it is also possible that this potential tool of censorship may bring users together because of their common interests.

<sup>21</sup> "It's what's happening," *Twitter* online, last modified June 30, 2016, <https://about.twitter.com/company>.

<sup>22</sup> Jacob Kastrenakes, "Instagram is now used by 400 million people each month" last modified September 22, 2015. <https://www.theverge.com/2015/9/22/9374837/instagram-400-million-monthly-active-users>.

<sup>23</sup> Salman Aslam, "Instagram by the Numbers: Stats, Demographics & Fun Facts" last modified April 29, 2017. <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/>.

<sup>24</sup> Owen Williams, "Twitter is now turning on its new algorithmic timeline for everyone" last modified March 17, 2016. <http://thenextweb.com/twitter/2016/03/17/twitter-quietly-turned-new-algorithmic-timeline-everyone/>.

<sup>25</sup> Williams.

This type of dramatic increase in the usage of the World Wide Web to become a service of a more personal and social nature transformed society's usage of public space through new layers of interaction. There are profound structural implications in terms of *Political Expressionism*, as there is a rise in the number of ways people can choose to communicate their thoughts and feelings. The sheer number of users and thousands of web platforms indicates the potential for social movements which use ICTs to have access to communicate in ways that were not possible in the past through TCMs. Facebook introduced a new feature, "Facebook live", a way to stream day-to-day experiences in real time.<sup>26</sup> This in turn changes how people are able to communicate in real time, where live video becomes a part of the cell phone experience.

A section was dedicated toward applying a comparative analysis contrasting the different strengths and weaknesses of major social movements in the world that followed the *Green Movement*. Specifically, the *Arab Spring*, *Taksim Square Gezi Park Movement*, and the *Umbrella movement* were analyzed. The significance of these movements is how people worldwide began to take to the streets by the hundreds of thousands or even millions as in Egypt and Turkey, exemplifying the trend of *Political Expressionism* continuing in new forms and yielding different results. By taking note of the trends that have followed since the *Green Movement's* debut onto the global stage, it becomes evident that the way social movements form will never be the same as those of conventional times and before the widespread use of ICTs.

To further expand the scope of this study, 407 surveys and thirty-four interviews were conducted with Iranian activists and participants from a broad range of backgrounds who participated in both *18 Tir* and the *Green Movement* to guide what types of theories should be

<sup>26</sup> "About Facebook Live | Online Streaming Videos" *Facebook* online, last modified 2016, <https://live.fb.com/about/>.

included in this paper and to highlight key trends. For security and safety considerations, results were redacted with emphasis on patterns as opposed to including the raw data itself. There was an overall trend in the predominant usage of blogging services while online and mobile devices played a strong role in participant and activist's daily lives. There also seemed to be a broader appeal of the *Green Movement* to non-students, indicating that there is higher unrest among this generation than that of *18 Tir*, comprised of a greater number of student participants. YouTube and Twitter usage was not as prevalent among the participants, possibly showing that those are venues where there are more people following major channels of information rather than all actively transmitting at once. The results from this portion of the study demonstrate how ICTs became more embedded in the daily lives of Iranians and that the world wide web served more as a tool for organization and participation as opposed to recreation.

An overall takeaway from this research is that the *Green Movement* is a prominent example of how a social movement is capable of mobilizing adherents by the millions in this age of Political Expressionism. Other social movements around the world rose to a similar level of prominence because participants knew it was not impossible to speak out in the face of oppressive conditions, in particular authoritarian or theocratic ones. The working class and rural areas of Iran remained largely absent from the *Green Movement* and may prove to be major contributors in future uprisings. When it appeared *18 Tir* had ended and hope was lost, almost a decade later the *Green Movement* rose and took the world by storm. At this time it is too early to predict what events will take place in Iran in a post-*Green Movement* world, but it is clear anything is possible, especially when unrest continues to mount. The recent December 2017 uprisings demonstrate social and political tensions in Iran are not subsiding any time soon.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

### Preface

To date there are numerous publications in academia and mainstream media that address the topic of social movements without giving a clear enough explanation as to what constitutes a social movement. It has become a very broad term, leading to the potential pitfall of theoretical overlap and possibly spurious rather than constructive discussions. For purposes of avoiding “re-inventing the wheel” an overview was conducted of two major waves of social movement theory: classical and contemporary. The classical definition of social movements, by Lorenz von Stein, was reviewed to provide a background for the concept itself. Then, two major contemporary models of social movement theory were analyzed, from Charles Tilly (2004) and Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald (1996). In terms of theories discussing transnational capacities and networks, Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink are overviewed, as well as Network Theory by David Grewal (2008). Network theory was an important recent development in the study of social movements because it further builds on the discourse with the idea of networks working together toward a mutual benefit, which can be applied almost directly to ICTs. There appears to be a trend in which not enough information is openly provided or discussed as to the spatial component of social movements. The majority of this chapter is dedicated to the conceptualization of space and its potential roles in the development of social movements, as this was a deciding factor in determining what information was most relevant towards analyzing the *Green Movement* and subsequent *Political Expressionist* movements. There are five dimensions of interaction within



social movements which include symbolism, location, capacity to spread, perception of space, and thresholds of resistance. This is the area where ICTs can be better understood in how they affect the relationships between states and societies. With the rapid rise of this communication method there is a common problem of researchers trying to find ways to measure and quantify their level of influence in society. A key focal point of this research is how space, state, and society are connected and how to best understand the role this method has in the age of *Political Expressionism* and, in particular, its impact on the *Green Movement*.

### **Definition of Social Movements**

Before evaluating the *Green Movement* and *18 Tir* in detail, for purposes of this research it is important to establish a working definition of social movements. Originally, this concept did not exist in the West until the mid-19th century, when social upheavals were mostly referred to as “revolutions”, a charged term often with a stigma attached implying the use of violence. The concept of Social Movements was first discussed in depth in the early 19th century, in the work *Socialist and Communist Movements since the Third French Revolution*, published in 1842 by Lorenz von Stein, a German Sociologist.<sup>27</sup> Much of his works remain scarcely available or translated, except for *The History of the Social Movement in France* originally published in 1894 and translated in 1964.<sup>28</sup> The difference in time between 1848 and 1964 is significant, setting the English speaking world more than a century behind in having access to the insights of this less well known but very significant theorist. An essential part of this research was to avoid the

<sup>27</sup>Lorenz von Stein, *Socialist and Communist Movements since the Third French Revolution* (Leipzig: O. Wigand, 1842).

<sup>28</sup> Lorenz von Stein, *The History of the Social Movement in France* (Totowa, N.J. Bedminster Press, 1964).

common pitfall of ambiguity. Von Stein mentions, “Whoever speaks of a science of society-- as one talks of political science or economic science-- is not only obliged to define the term, but also to oppose the mass of vague conceptions about it and the general belief that anybody might be right and should be allowed to assume whatever he pleases,”<sup>29</sup> In agreement with this position, and to avoid contradictions and confusion as to the meaning of social movements, the definition in this research was derived from the work of Lorenz von Stein.

Over the course of the 20th century and prior to widespread knowledge of von Stein’s definition, the predominant term was revolution. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Current English in 1912, revolution was described as, “complete change, turning upside down, great reversal of conditions, fundamental reconstruction esp. forcible substitution by subjects of new ruler or polity for the old.”<sup>30</sup> Prevalence of that term with its negative connotations in the past was problematic on grounds that it implies a violent nature. There also is an issue of the high likelihood where large areas of the academic study of social movements may adopt possibly misguided approaches and understandings of social movements when using that term interchangeably with revolution. For these reasons it was important that the concept of social movements came into existence because it gives more depth to people organizing together for change than what typically would be conceived as a revolt. The rise of social movements as the dominant term to describe social upheavals created a shift in the public and researchers’ perceptions of phenomena. To date, social movements tend to be described interchangeably as “revolutions”, becoming a possible source for confusion. A social movement itself may not

<sup>29</sup> Lorenz von Stein, *The History of the Social Movement in France* (Totowa, N.J. Bedminster Press, 1964). 43.

<sup>30</sup> Henry Watson Fowler and Francis George Fowler, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford University Press, 1912).

equate to revolution, but a revolution can result from a social movement. It is important that these terms be understood in the proper context, otherwise limiting the analytical scope to review transitional elements within a social movement which may or may not lead to revolution. .

The distinction is important: According to von Stein, social movements happen when there is a subjugated class and a ruling class, and the subjugated class “in fact demands of the ruling class that it shall use its own power to divest itself from its opponents.”<sup>31</sup> The idea is the oppressed class seeks the ruling class to remove itself from power. The ruling class of von Stein’s time are most similar to the regimes of today, and the subjugated class includes the activists or people whose rights are being taken away by repressive governments. In evaluating this definition, it appears there are two possible major outcomes for a social movement to be successful; either a government listens to the demands of the subjugated and allows for their demands to be answered through reform, or a revolution will occur and until the government divests its power. He defines reform as “whenever the government, overwhelmed by internal or external pressures, yields to the demands of the hitherto dependent class and introduces the necessary changes in the constitution and administration,” and adds, “Even a complete change in constitutional law, if carried out by established organs, is not a revolution but a reform.”<sup>32</sup> Under this definition, changes brought on by the ruling party to meet the demands of the subjugated still constitutes reform.

Von Stein defines the prerequisites for revolution as follows, , “The revolution is therefore a necessary, quite natural event, as soon as the dependent class acquired the material and intellectual social prerequisites for its equality by changing the constitutional law and

<sup>31</sup> von Stein, *The History of the Social Movement in France*, 76.

<sup>32</sup> von Stein, 74.

extending social rights.”<sup>33</sup> Equality is seen as a focal point, with education viewed as an important precondition to carry out a successful revolution, the term “material” in the context is similar to the “mobilization resources” of our own time. Furthermore, von Stein elaborates, "Any revolution in which the dependent class comes forward with these demands without being readily prepared materially as well as intellectually is contradictory to the principle of justice, and will be unsuccessful because it does not reflect the truth."<sup>34</sup> This suggests that if the opposition does not organize or educate itself properly and does not prepare strong enough reasoning, there will be difficulties for the social movement to hold its ground in the long run. ICTs can help in the dissemination of such information in ways that in the past would not be possible, much easier to get educated and share important ideas.

Despite von Stein’s thorough explanation of these terms, it is surprising that for over 100 years this work was not made available to the English-speaking parts of the world. It is troubling that it took such a long time for such a work to reach mainstream social and political science; this means that very likely there were circular discussions about this phenomenon, taking time to reinvent reasoning similar to von Stein’s. As a consequence, the field would likely lag behind in terms of discourse development. Additionally, von Stein’s work was produced close to the time of the French revolution which ended in 1799, allowing him access to authoritative sources and information about that socio-political event which most contemporary social and political scientists would have difficulty procuring.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 77.

Besides reform and revolution, it is important to consider two additional possible factors that he did not elaborate on; repression and radical intervention; that may happen over the course of a social movement and be capable of interfering with its outcome in significant ways. Radical intervention is rooted in repression but its effects are far-reaching, instantaneous, and often brought about by violent means. Repression can take on forms that may not be as forceful or rapid which include regimes trying to silence the actors, imprisonment, torture, propaganda, infiltration, censorship, among others. Radical intervention can include hijacking a social movement, military intervention, or infiltration of extreme ideologies. As society has become much more advanced technologically, so have these different tactics, the styles of which these suppressive strategies are constantly changing. Depending on how a social movement directs itself, if successful in achieving its goal, it will result in reform or revolution. Otherwise, the alternative may involve other external or internal interference through repression or radical intervention that would result in major negative outcomes.

Over the course of this study, aside from the theoretical framework in following von Stein's definition of social movements, there are four major directions which a social movement can proceed: two positive, reform or revolution, and two negative, repression or radical intervention. This last term embodies much more than it once did, in particular interaction with ICTs, an important matter of concern for future research.

### **Contemporary Organizational Models of Social Movements**

Most social movements tend to share a similar set of features independent of their respective environments. It is the environments and how people conceptualize space, which in

turn play a leading role in the shaping of their structures and ultimate outcomes. In the field of political science there have been several attempts at describing an archetypal type structure that a social movement may be measured against. Although useful for providing a general understanding of the driving forces, even the most prominent theories appear to not be comprehensive enough in analyzing how social movements organize, mobilize, form, rise and fall. They are the vaguest about the conceptualization of space, leaving unanswered questions about the subtleties at work. Two prominent works on contemporary social movement theory by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald and Charles Tilly were among the earliest written by political scientists in the United States to develop models of analysis. In terms of theories with a more specific direction related to the network component of social movements, in 1998, Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink explored the transnational organizational capacity of social movements and the importance of networks being able to introduce ideas across large distances. In 2008, David Grewal introduced the idea of networks accomplishing work to gain mutual benefits.

There are four areas of social movement theory that appeared relevant toward conducting research about the *Green Movement*; they include general model of social movement structures, Transnational Advocacy Networks or TANs, network model theory and the concept of resource mobilization. The selected works were chosen because they were among the first to address these concepts in the field of social and political sciences. These forms of visualizing and interpreting social movements tend to overlap in many ways and share the common area where space is conceptualized. Space is what impacts all the different dynamics those theorists discussed.

There were two major social movements models posited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* and Charles Tilly in *Social Movements*. It appears the two seem to be more related to each other than not, with Charles Tilly's model building upon certain aspects of the political opportunity structures created by McAdam et al. This model is based on three factors: "These three factors are (1) the structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movement; (2) the forms of organization (informal as well as formal), available to insurgents; and (3) the collective process of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action."<sup>35</sup> There is, however, an inherent challenge that involves defining the criteria to determine the influence of external factors (an aspect of space) affecting the formation of social movements.<sup>36</sup> There is an additional risk where the discourse of political opportunity theory could veer off in a direction that may invite a chain of theories building on other theories.<sup>37</sup>

By contrast to the aforementioned definition, Charles Tilly offers a list of specific elements similar to political opportunity structures while building upon them in certain areas. His description of a social movement is:

"1. a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities (let us call it a campaign); 2. employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering (call the

<sup>35</sup> Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4.

<sup>36</sup> David S. Meyer and Debra C. Minkoff, "Conceptualizing Political Opportunity," *Social Forces* 82, no. 4 (2004): 1459

<sup>37</sup> Meyer et al., "Conceptualizing Political Opportunity," 1460.

variable ensemble of performances the social movement repertoire); and 3. participants' concerted public representations of WUNC: worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies (call them WUNC displays)”.<sup>38</sup>

Both theories can be summarized as describing that social movements have: 1. A central focal point, 2. Organizational Methods, and 3. Forms of mediation. Based upon these definitions, it can be understood that Social Movements are a venue for the public to channel their requests and desires, similar to von Stein's definition of social movements as a fulcrum between reform and revolution. These models help to serve as a form of checks and balances for understanding how this political process unfolds and the degree to which it developed.

The first and second components from both models serve as a point of commonality, whereas in the third component Tilly's concept makes a slight departure upon the introduction of WUNC displays, reducing ambiguity by providing a more descriptive explanation of mediation, including the possible types that can exist. These two definitions are significant as they are among the first of their kind, thus leaving a strong base for the study of social movements, yet they do not include factors dealing with activists' interactions between state, space and society. Based on these criteria alone, *18 Tir* and the *Green Movement* could be perceived as the same type of movement without accommodating the additional factors of space. Tilly's addition of WUNC displays illustrates a need in this field for understanding the aspect of space in social movements. Consequently, part of this process requires an understanding of the networks themselves.

<sup>38</sup> Tilly, *Social Movements*, 3-4.



## Network Theories

In exploring this type of modeling method, Keck and Sikkink and their work, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* seems relevant, as they explain the significance of actors in networks, “Network actors bring new ideas, norms, and discourses into policy debates, and serve as sources of information and testimony.”<sup>39</sup> This type of interaction motivates people to collaborate with one another in order to accomplish their shared interests. They also coined the term Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) to explain this grouping process. According to Keck and Sikkink, “A transnational advocacy network includes those actors working internationally on an issue who are bound together by shared value, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services.” This discourse is important as it opens a dialogue on the interrelatedness which may exist between social movements.

For a broader understanding of networks and how they operate in social movements, David Grewal developed the concept of Network Power: “The concept of network power joins two ideas: first, that standards are more valuable when greater numbers of people use them because they offer a form of coordination that exhibits economies of scale; and second, that one effect of this coordination is, over time, to eliminate alternative standards that might have been freely chosen.”<sup>40</sup> This is perhaps one of the theories closest to touching on the concept of space and how a social movement is able to gather a large following. Another important perspective Grewal brought up was in his description of networks as, “an interconnected group of people linked to one another in a way that makes them capable of beneficial cooperation, which can take

<sup>39</sup> Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, vol. 6 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 3.

<sup>40</sup> David Singh Grewal, *Network Power: The Social Dynamics of Globalization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 26.

various forms, including the exchange of goods and ideas.”<sup>41</sup> ICTs as a space for connecting people can accelerate the speeds at which such processes operate, creating more venues for expansion and the dissemination of information. When contrasted with the work of Keck and Sikkink, Grewal’s model offers a slightly broader scope in the respect that network power and communications may be regional or international, not just international. Looking beyond networks, it was also significant to find out whether within this framework there was a discussion of resource usage, as this is where resource mobilization becomes of importance.

### **Resource Mobilization**

Resource mobilization theory by McCarthy et al. predates network theory models and the aforementioned social movement models, giving important insight into the dynamics of space within social movements. Despite resource mobilization theory being published in 1977, it can incorporate conceptually the roles of TCMs and ICTs in the development of Social Movements as, “It examines the variety of resources that must be mobilized, the linkages of social movements, to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success, and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements.”<sup>42</sup> ICTs, like TCMs, can serve as this external support, except that net-based methods are even more accessible to the public and available for authorities to use either for manipulating or dissolving a social movement. This element of flexibility is an important component of the conceptualization of space in determining the capacities of such networks in the continuum between TCMs and ICTs.

<sup>41</sup> Grewal, *Network Power: The Social Dynamics of Globalization*, 20.

<sup>42</sup> John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (1977): 1213.

Resource mobilization theory can be seen as an early inquiry into the conceptualization of space. It can also be argued that based on these theories alone there is a significant amount of overlap. The components that interact to make social movements possible are assigned many names but still exist independent of who names them. These contemporary theories helped further develop and refine the modern understanding of how social movements are structured.

However, even with such advances, people's understanding and the extent of the applicability these theories have on social movements are limited both by their geographic and cultural biases. Most contemporary social movement theories were developed based on the observation of occurrences taking place in Western Europe and the Americas and during a time when ICTs were not in widespread global use. TCMs were the dominant means of communication during that time, and even then could have been explored further since conceptualization of space underwent multiple shifts prior to the advent of ICTs. Among these shifts were transitions into more effortless communication with Morse code, radio, and television. As social movements become more dependent on ICT usage, the need for analyzing the conceptualization of space becomes much more important. The framework provided in the discussion about the conceptualization of space helps identify different roles of ICTs in the shaping of social movements.

Social movements need a more comprehensive model than those offered by contemporary and classical theories. Because of their areas of ambiguity, a social movement analysis framework was designed for this research to measure the level of influence ICTs or TCMs have over a particular movement's conceptualization of space. ICTs can accelerate the speeds at which such processes operate, creating more venues for expansion and the

dissemination of information but are also vulnerable to new forms of censorship and decentralization due to high amounts of anonymity and disinformation. It must be noted that TCMs cannot be fully supplanted, nor be only methods of communication used by a social movement due to the faster rate at which information can be transmitted via ICTs. This new framework, known as the conceptualization of space, addresses the role of ICTs or other methods of communication and organization to understand their place in modern social movements.

## **Social Movement Analysis Framework**

### **Conceptualization of Space**

Conceptualization of space appears to be the major blind spot in modern social movement theory, often discussed indirectly but not as a category onto itself. It can be affected in a number of ways; for this study, five dimensions were established to measure the role of ICTs and TCMs in different social movements. As stated earlier, *Political Expressionism* can often take on various levels of influence depending on how heavily a social movement relies on ICTs. The greater the dependence the higher chance for volatility in terms of material available to study about that movement. When TCMs are more dominant in a social movement there is likely more material available in print, tape, or other antiquated mediums. In these cases, less abstract theories would apply and would be more straightforward in being able to analyze the social movement.

However, when movements use ICTs as a primary source, it is less clear where one message begins and the other ends. One person could tweet an order, then post on a blog of a particular page, then send an e-mail, etc. No one except that person or people close to this

individual would be able to determine that a tweet led to a post which then compelled the delivery of an email leading to a specific outcome. ICTs influence the conceptualization of space often in unpredictable ways. *Digital Content Temporality* is an additional factor to consider; the same tweet could be deleted along with the blog post, where the only remaining evidence is the e-mail of the recipient and not the original sender. In these cases, more abstract theories are important when dealing with limited, obscure, or manipulated information available online.

ICTs can impact social movements in massive ways, however, ultimately the foundation of a social movement seems to be an overriding factor. The objective behind evaluating the conceptualization of space when presented with ambiguity as to the flow of information, is to consider factors such as how people perceive themselves. When there are fewer monopolies on communication methods, people are more in control and the focus then shifts away from the macro level; most manifestations are centralized and highlights the standpoint of protesters themselves in more decentralized and fluid forms of existence.

The widespread accessibility of ICTs means that political actions are much easier to conduct and therefore observation is more difficult, especially when manifestations become increasingly abstract. As it is easier for information to be disseminated, researchers must comb through much more than anticipated in the past. Such information is not printed and can be easily taken offline or will eventually expire. Almost all online content will be modified or removed, making research more difficult, and with the current pace in academia by the time a project is completed and published a lot of data may become lost.

This calls into question how such a phenomenon is to be studied in academia and understood among activists. Social Movements are at the crossroads between TCMs, such as

print, fax, and mail, and how they interact with the more dominant influence of ICTs. Increased access to the World Wide Web specifically through mobile devices further alters the ways people interact with each other. The trajectory of modern politics entered an uncharted territory which could call into question decades of reputable research. Political science theories may need to be re-examined in order to keep pace with these rapid developments. With the rise of *Political Expressionism* there is a shift in the understanding of how space is conceptualized when people mobilize. This new form of thought, stemming from increased reliance on ICTs, was an important part of the *Green Movement's* ability to reach wide numbers of participants within a short period of time. In turn this both complicates and enriches their ability to communicate, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4. Subsequent movements across the Middle East and East Asia took on similar characteristics with the widespread transmission of information through usage of various methods.

A major shortcoming across different works analyzed as part of this project is the lack of agreement on how to even describe social movements and their components. Even the concept of "social movements" itself must be questioned, as its definition may be subject to debate. Reasons why a social movement may succeed, fail, or be sustainable in a specific part of the world will differ from others and it is critical to understand the nuances that set them apart. Since social movements underwent numerous shifts and will continue to do so, to categorize them all may be too tedious and there is a risk that key patterns may end up being overlooked. For that reason, this study placed an emphasis on understanding the common threads between different Social Movements to set precedence for future research.

It could be argued that all social movements are unique, but they also share more areas in common than would be expected. Most social movements in this age are increasingly interconnected in more ways than one, even if they are said to be independent of each other. The more technologically connected societies are, the more informed they will be, and the higher chance for incidental influences and exchanges to be possible. Even if they do not know in full detail what is going on across the globe, people cannot hide from the rapid dissemination of information that comes with the increased usage of ICTs.

Due to the rise of ICTs, people's roles are continuously changing, not only in social movements but in terms of how state and society are related through space. This method ought to be researched more in mainstream academia. Although there is an emphasis in this research on the *Green Movement*, a general framework was established for studying the conceptualization of space within social movements and politics in general. This framework consists of five dimensions that help further break down the complexity of conceptualizing space.

## **5 Dimensions**

The following five dimensions were influential factors guiding the course of analysis about the *Green Movement's* regional and international implications: symbolism (semiotics), location, capacity to spread, perception of space, and thresholds of resistance. These five areas are where significant levels of participant engagement can be gauged. The philosophy of semiotics plays an important role in understanding how symbolism fits within this analytical framework to dissect social movements as there must be a signifier and signified; for example, the signifier serving as a label and the signified being the object itself. Types of labels can

include notable individuals, tragic deaths, key chants, choice of color, and symbolic imagery, among others.

According to Gunther Kress, a professor of Semiotics in the University of London, in his work *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*, he explains that there is a shift taking place, away from books to screens where the dominant mode of published material leans more toward imagery, towards ICTs as they become more widespread<sup>43</sup>. He likened the academic stance on this matter as being overdue; in pursuit of a “horse that left its stable a long time ago”<sup>44</sup>. Beside the fact that newer technologies do not appear to be a part of the discourse on semiotics, the same is likely to apply toward the field of social movements in which it appears that there is one-size-fits-all type approach. The problem with such an unprecedented amount of communication taking place online, and the countless number of uses in conjunction with offline media, is that it is difficult to apply previous traditional approaches at analyzing social movements without falling behind. While it is important to have general models, understanding how the components of the interaction process work is essential. There will almost always be disagreements over interpretations of the meaning behind events and symbols within the same and different cultures.<sup>45</sup>. Taking into consideration the value people attach to certain ideas goes beyond the actual idea itself. For example, a color may have no meaning in one context but will in another. It is under this premise that semiotics is significant toward understanding the *Green Movement* in relation to *18 Tir*, as well as other regional and international social movements.

<sup>43</sup> Gunther Kress, *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), 6.

<sup>44</sup> Kress, *Multimodality*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 8.



It remains unclear as to why this philosophy continues to be almost absent in most literature on social movement theory; though it may allude to concepts related to semiotics, it does not address the matter thoroughly. Typically, social movement research tends to be limited to applying more traditional modes of understanding, or newer but very much similar means on a nation-by-nation approach. This can detract attention away from the common patterns or trends in symbolism that tend to be the driving forces behind mobilization. For example, the emblem of the Otpor! movement was modified slightly and used in the *April 6* movement. The rising fist attracted attention, inspiring participants in a very similar manner to its actual meaning for the respective movements in Serbia and Egypt. Although no two movements are the same, they tend to share certain factors and common turning points, such as certain notable deaths during a movement. From this it can be inferred that such tragic events have a certain measurable effect in the form of people taking to the streets and protesting, although the exact impact will be contingent on where the events took place. This philosophy allows for researchers to look beyond discussions in a more linear mode of analysis. The massive amounts of data and types of potential catalysts of a social movement keep changing, and what worked for one movement may not translate into another. Nonetheless, different activists can learn from each other through the transfer of tactics, images, and stories.

Even within the same nation, a social movement may end, but reappear under a different name and presentation with a similar, if not same, end goal. Semiotics, when applied to social movements, may help to reveal certain details about how key aspects can help define a movement, whether linguistic or visual. Driving forces within social movements tend to be composed of different signifiers which can be used to identify them with greater accuracy.

Semiotics are significant in understanding the meanings people attribute to social movements and what happens within these movements. Slogans, images, and events were all areas that were dissected through conducting different analyses.

In the *Green Movement* one of its signature attractions was its color, which once had a more conservative religious connotation for Shia but also a cultural connection. This color became redefined after the *Green Movement's* onset, it now represents resistance, a desire for change, and freedom for the people of Iran. People still choose to wear green, showing solidarity with the movement, even years after its peak. Besides colors, individuals can represent social movements as well. Neda-Agha Soltane, during the *Green Movement* in 2009, captured global attention with an image of her last seconds of life before being killed by government militia.<sup>46</sup> She became the symbol for bringing people together, remembering all those like her who died known or unknown, a reminder of the brutal injustices taking place in the open and behind closed doors. In Korea during the 1980's it was Lee Hanyeol, during the Arab Spring in Tunisia it was Mohamad Bouazizi, in Egypt Khalid Saeed, and Berkin Elvan shortly after the Taksim Square/Gezi Park movement: these were key individuals who served as symbolic representations of the struggles within their respective movements.

In terms of location, as ICTs are becoming a dominant part of the public space, as they are neither completely physical nor virtual, Michel Foucault's concept of Heterotopia becomes relevant. It is important to consider that there now exists fluidity between actual physical locations and imaginary online locations. This combination of the imaginary and concrete

<sup>46</sup> Krista Mahr, "The Top 10 Everything of 2009." last modified December 8, 2009. [http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1945379\\_1944701\\_1944705,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1945379_1944701_1944705,00.html).

actualities are redefining day-to-day interactions. Events can be organized online to meet in person, or people meet in person to go online. His concept helps guide the analysis on how the purpose of the internet as a space in society is evolving. This kind of location connects between the concrete intensities of everyday life and the utopian gateway it represents.<sup>47</sup> His example of the graveyard and its location in different cities of 18th century and 19th century Europe are relevant because people's feelings toward the afterlife determined its location, either within the city center or in its outskirts.<sup>48</sup> Heterotopia when applied to the World Wide Web like the graveyard in his example, a unique place because it can be accessed from a physical location but also exists on an imaginary plane. The difference is that users of the World Wide Web connect to information outside of physical existence, accessible from most computers in many parts of the world, where web pages remain active and accessible often during all times of day. There was a shift from ICTs at first being a private tool, exclusive to engineers, to a public thoroughfare in only decades since its initial release. It moved from the outskirts of society into the center of people's lifestyles. Since ICTs play an increasingly dominant role in our daily lives, they become a public space that never sleeps and most posts, messages, and videos are continuously accessible. There is the potential for ideas to spread at unforeseen speeds rather than remaining stagnant, and rhizomatic interpretation is important to better understand the ways ideas transfer from one area to another and why.

This phenomena can be described using the Deluzian philosophy of Rhizome; to understand society in a way other than a narrative but without starting or ending points, it is

<sup>47</sup> Foucault and Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," 23

<sup>48</sup> Foucault and Miskowiec, 25.

named after the biological rhizome in the structure of a plant.<sup>49</sup> Gilles Deleuze describes this concept in the following way: “The Rhizome includes the best and the worst: potato and couch grass, or the weed.”<sup>50</sup> Different factors over the course of a social movement’s development in turn will determine which parts will live on or cease to exist. Rhizomatic spread of social movements can take place both in positive and negative ways, such as the transmission of truths or the censorship of them. Whether out in the streets or in cyberspace, the ways activists can exert their influence is important in terms of regional and transnational potential, as there will almost always be trendsetters and those who seek to emulate those trends for better or for worse. Gradually, social movements are becoming a more decentralized, participant-centered paradigm. This makes it more difficult to tell where certain ideas or actions may originate. Incidental influences and increased volatility due to a high-volume interaction can lead to social movements forming in simultaneous and/or consequent manners. More antiquated social movements tended to be isolated to the area of origin, whereas ICTs make it possible for the whole world to know what is going on and everybody has the chance to emulate its behaviors. With the world becoming more connected and globalized, it is important to keep research open to the possibility of ideas transferring between nations, urban and suburban, in unexpected ways and giving each a unique character and mode of operation. Attention should be focused on this type of reproductive capacity of social movements, because there are many ways in which they can be imitated, both by their best qualities and their worst. Additionally, the type of rhizomes produced and the environments they attach themselves to are significant in measuring whether or not they are capable of gaining a strong following or spread. Looking beyond reproductive

<sup>49</sup> Deleuze et al., *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 7.

capacities then leads to the issue of perception; when people start to behave in new ways, so does their understanding of how they interact.

Perception within a social movement can best be understood with the concept of the Lacanian gaze, as it is relevant toward the uncharted territory of ICTs; like a soldier in the middle of a war. With reference to warfare, Mike Shapiro explains, “More generally, from a Lacanian perspective, the gaze alienates subjects from themselves by causing them to see themselves as objects of the gaze of others, which makes the field of vision traumatic.”<sup>51</sup> The World Wide Web brought on a whole new concept of personal identity. Some people choose to be their actual selves. Others make up identities, appropriate others’ identities, or stay anonymous altogether. One creates one’s own experience, but is always being watched, whether it is friends, families, acquaintances or governments. Although it became adopted by a large percentage of the global population, the internet can be both an empowering or disorienting experience, almost like a second life. To go online may not be intense as compared to war, but the traumas and dangers are very real, much like the Telescreen of George Orwell’s 1984; someone and everyone is continually watching or being watched, especially governments or what he described as “BIG BROTHER”.<sup>52</sup> Lacan mentions a vital point regarding being under the watchful eye, drawing upon thoughts from Maurice Merleau-Ponty in that, “What we have to circumscribe, by means of path he indicates for us, is the pre-existence of a gaze-- I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides”.<sup>53</sup> This type of gaze is present

<sup>51</sup> Michael J. Shapiro, *War Crimes, Atrocity, and Justice* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015), 84.

<sup>52</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Everyman's Library, 2009), 3.

<sup>53</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan. (New York: Norton, 1978), 72.

through the use of ICTs which forever altered the concepts of individuality and the individual. The Internet allows for this experience to be possible in which there is a sense of anonymity with the paranoia of all actions being tracked. The overall illusion of anonymity the internet provides likely caused people to be more outspoken than in times past, as seen with an increase in number of major social movements across the globe. This anonymity however, does not exist without risks; governments are continuously trying to find new ways to monitor people's activities online. However, this ability to monitor goes both ways; governments can track their civilians and civilians can track their governments. This reflects the Lacanian Gaze, in which other people can take on abstract names and alternate identities and are no longer the same people you see and interact with on an everyday basis in the real world.

Another factor to consider is when interaction would be considered a rebellious activity; depending on the country, what may be a benign behavior or expression of fun in one area may be viewed as hostility in another. This is why thresholds of resistance are another important area to examine, because it lends itself to the idea of leisure as resistance, known as the *Politics of Fun*, coined by Dr. Asef Bayat in his text, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*. For example, the viral nature of the World Wide Web and the unique conditions in Iran under autocratic rule allow for a lower threshold to exist, in which almost any statement or action not approved by government policy will be seen as contentious and will be taken very seriously. In Iran, people have been imprisoned and killed because of what they posted online. The lower the threshold, the more likely expressions of fun may be viewed as signs of rebellion and people may be persecuted by governments who take offense to such behaviors. Bayat's definition of fun is unique because, "Fun is a metaphor for the expression of individuality,

spontaneity, and lightness, in which joy is the central element. While joy is neither an equivalent nor a definition of fun, it remains a key component of it.”<sup>54</sup> Fun becomes more than a behavior taken on to express joy but as a tool to express individuality. Whereas people in most countries would often equate fun with joy, Iran particularly is a place where fun is a form of contention and not always about joy. At the same time, this concept applies to additional nations, and Iran is just one of the more extreme cases. Bayat adds, "The fear of fun is not restricted to Islamists and Islam but extends to most religions. It is not even a merely religious concern; secularists, whether revolutionary or conservative, have also expressed apprehension of and animosity toward fun."<sup>55</sup> The theories by Bayat, Şener and Bakhtin illustrate how recreation transforms into contention should it resist or go against a government's doctrines. The increased availability of ICTs in recent years made usage more commonplace. It is no longer a pastime for the purpose of work, business, education, but an activity almost everyone in urban areas and some parts of rural areas participate in. People as individuals or groups can share or create songs, satires, and films or other types of productions to relate their experiences and desires to broad audiences on a regional and international level in a matter of seconds.

### **Political Expressionism and Conceptualization of Space**

*Political Expressionism* and how the conceptualization of space drives its advancement was incorporated into this research to measure the structure and capacities of the *Green Movement* and the *18 Tir* movement. Social movements have been around for a very long time,

<sup>54</sup> Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 138.

<sup>55</sup> Bayat, *Life as Politics*, 139.

and it would be difficult to consider one movement as the first and another as the last, as they may exist contemporaneously or without knowledge of the other. To discuss social movements as a narrative may detract attention from the paradigm shifts that are happening within society as years progress, rather than looking at the core components for a deeper understanding of the abstract nature involved. In understanding these theories from the standpoint of *Political Expressionism* it becomes clearer how participants conceptualize space to help find key areas of similarities, differences, weaknesses, and strengths, particularly in the ways people interact with each other across social movements. The future of social movements can be estimated to a reasonable extent when there is understanding of the roles of symbolism (semiotics), location, capacity to spread, perception of space, and threshold of resistance to determine a movement's sustainability and reasons behind certain failures. Due to the high level of censorship and propaganda both inside and outside of Iran and other nations, it was difficult to get a clear and equal understanding of each dimension on its own terms. Instead, they helped guide this study to find patterns and better understand the nature behind how certain events unfolded. These dimensions help illustrate key differences between *18 Tir* and the *Green Movement* and how such a massive shift in participation was possible with the rise of ICTs.

### **Defining a People**

Social movements and people tend to be treated as synonymous concepts. Which raises the question of where a line is to be drawn between the two. Social Movements serve as a tool for the people, the people in turn make use of the outcomes of that tool. Whether in success or failure, people will remain. This is where the dimension of Lacanian relational awareness is



significant, because it highlights a need to contemplate the role self perception within a given interaction. A people regulates the social movement's dominance over their immediate and abstract space before and after it takes place. They are the direct beneficiaries of any measurable outcomes. Often, social movement debate or controversy is centered on finding points of origin. This study postulates there are different gradations of a "people", and it should be treated as a flexible rather than a fixed term. Depending on the movement there may be a more uniform people or various factions united as one. A people or different groups of people form over hundreds of years or even in an instant reaction. The recent social movements in the Middle East and Far East suggest a combination of the two.

A people is defined by numerous factors, and can develop over time or unite under a particular cause to become one. People are the factor of cohesion that can make or break a social movement due to divisive volatility arising from disagreements. An entire work was dedicated for the sole purpose of understanding how is a people defined known as "What is a People?" by Alain Badiou, Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler, Georges Didi-Huberman, Sadri Khiari, and Jacques Rancière. It explores various types of theories opening with an overview of Rosseau's social contract between individuals and communities.<sup>56</sup>

Rosseau addresses the potential discrepancy in the contract where the one, "finds himself under a twofold commitment: namely as a member of the sovereign to private individuals, and as a member of the state toward the sovereign".<sup>57</sup> The authors highlight a split between the role of

<sup>56</sup> Alain Badiou and Jody Gladding, *What is a people?* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2016), 6.

<sup>57</sup> Badiou et al. *What is a people?*, 7.

a person as an individual and part of a new body politic.<sup>58</sup> There is a push and pull between the two realities of the private and public individual a contract which appears to be seemingly unequal to a certain extent. This can be seen in social movements where there are different groups of people that align with certain affiliations. This type of contradiction is more present in societies which have a “people” that developed over thousands of years clashing with a current concept of statehood which contradicts their values.

The authors also address that, "The truth is that “people” is now a neutral term, like so many others in the political lexicon. Everything is a matter of context."<sup>59</sup> Another entire study could be dedicated to solving the question of what is a people. Following that frame of thought, this research applied a context to define a people. Indicative factors include their socio-political activities such as history, shared goals, and accomplishments, among other factors.

Outsider perspectives tend to dominate both mainstream academia and media and tend to create questionable depictions of different peoples that are often misleading. The issues arise as to how accurate is the representation of a particular people, and are ideas being imposed, promoting propaganda, or whether a depiction is objective enough. Even within a social movement no two people will share the exact same understanding of its construction and operation, therefore the perspective of outside parties will be even more removed. It is important to focus on impartiality, otherwise cycles can form where assumptions lead to sharing misguided information to the detriment of researchers and participants.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 21.

It became evident with recent uprisings that multiple kinds of “people” exist whether through cultural, political, educational bonds or some other commonality. In some cases there is more than one source of motivation for people, like in the *Green Movement* where there were social, cultural, political and historical catalysts. In the Battle of Seattle there was more emphasis on political motivations toward reform as opposed to the major cultural overhaul of the *Green Movement*. A social movement is availed from by its people and a people are defined by context. Some environments are more conducive than others for the formation of social movement which can succeed and a country can have a future after its success.

As seen in different social movements, the more well-founded structure is for the existence of a “people”, whether it is multiple groups sharing points of commonality or a single people, the less likely they can be affected by internal or external conflicts. For example, if there are a significant number of internal disputes there will be negative impacts that lead to major breakdowns in communication, which can then either end or slow down a movement significantly. This type of volatility can lead to outcomes which can be perceived as “failures”. Yet even what could be argued as failures, those in turn can become successes. Therefore, what works and what did not work in one social movement can both be used to the benefit of another.

This is why the *Green Movement* stands out: because social movements that followed had the benefit of learning from the *Green Movement*, and it was among the first in which its people demonstrated their defiance under very risky, life threatening conditions in an unstable region. Others in the region could see if it was possible in Iran then it can be done elsewhere. The fact that protests were even possible in a country without freedom of speech showed that it could be possible in other places as well. The *Green Movement* broke the barrier between people

and rough states, reminding the world that it is not necessary to conform to a state which harms its own people on a regular basis and that peaceful, positive change can be possible.

Similarly, this type of occurrence began to reproduce itself. As it was stated in the case of Egypt, “From which we see that “people” here takes on a meaning that implies the disappearance of the existing state. And, beyond that, the disappearance of state itself, from the moment that political decisions are in the hands of a new people assembled on a square, assembled right here.”<sup>60</sup> As to how “new” that people is or different from the majority of Egyptians can be subject to debate. Many of the recent uprisings appear to be a “new” outlet for decades-old claims, similar to what happened in Iran. In effect two people can exist one of a socio-historical base and one political; rather than contradict each other, the two types of people can complement and enrich each other. Intergenerational struggles can lead to the discovery of new outlets that fortify and strengthen the identity by which people desire to be represented, as opposed to the one which the state is imposing upon them.

### **On Measuring Success**

Another matter considered in these analytical processes are the concepts of failure and success. This discussion seems somewhat absent, often alluded to but not discussed in a direct enough manner. The success of a social movement should be attributed to whether its main goal is met. Often too much responsibility is attached to a social movement, and it is often forgotten that it operates more like a tool, in that after it is finished people must reconstruct or participate in a future social movement which better meets their goals .

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., *What is a people?*, 27.

If the main goal is met, such as deposing a regime, then mainstream scrutiny tends to be placed on the consequences of that accomplishment. The general mindset tends to be more critical than it ought to be. This research identifies success as accomplishing the main goal, however, the events that follow are the responsibility of the people from all ranks of society, not the movement. Then looking beyond the main goal, there are micro goals working as tributaries leading up to the main goal and its ultimate culmination.

It seems most dialogue on social movements lacks a clear delineation between micro and main goals. The micro goals are made with the goal of accomplishing the macro goal. All the circumstances combined lead to an outcome, whether it is success or failure at removing a government. The overviews tend to be geographically and conceptually limited. A social movement model based on Western politics tends to describe a different set of expectations. Those perspectives fit a certain paradigm which does not translate well into analysis of the uprisings in the Middle East and Far East. In this modern age social movements are becoming more connected because of how rapid information is disseminated.

The role of a social movement is to accomplish its macro goal. Sometimes it may take longer than expected and the mistakes from one movement may lead to the success of another at a future time. The *Green Movement* did not oust the current regime but helped set a trend for future resistance in the region against oppression.

In the Arab Spring, similar behaviors took place in Egypt and Tunisia, except participants were more outspoken and were applying *Meydan Expressionism*, and in those countries, overthrows were completed with success. Then the people took responsibility and managed the

reconstruction process. In Egypt, Mubarak was overthrown but infighting and disagreements among the people led to the Muslim Brotherhood hijacking the government. However, it is likely the Egyptian military intervened in part out of fear that Egypt would turn into a theocracy, possibly like Iran. Rank is important, because without everyone's support people stand divided and future success is grim. Tunisia to date remains a secular democracy in relatively stable condition despite recent protests against corruption. To establish democracy is a process with several factors and cannot happen in one night. In both cases, the people of nation from all social and political ranks stepped in to make sure everything followed in the proper order after the respective overthrows.

Looking to Eastern Europe, the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine, provoked by fraudulent elections, is an example of *Meydan Expressionism*. It was used by activists to have their message heard and continued until their goal was met: elections to be held again in a fair manner. The Otpor! Movement in Serbia was able to remove Milosevic from power, which was a major step toward improving socio-political conditions within the country. These two movements, specifically the Otpor! Movement, could be related or compared to other social movements in the West because of the rampant instability, similar to what exists in many parts of the Middle East.

In the Western paradigm, political systems generally do not need to be redeveloped from their core but instead can be reformed. Even in Ukraine and Serbia, there is no major threat of theocracy, though the government conditions were just as corrupt and dangerous as many parts of the Middle East. Similar to the Western paradigm, Hong Kong's protests under the Umbrella Movement and the following protests in Macao used ICTs on a larger scale, similar to what took

place in the Middle East but yet these did not call for government removal. Instead their request was more reform related because the Sino-British pact was at issue.

It appears there is much more fluidity in the capacity of social movements to create change as technological advancements continue to provoke shifts in the nature of politics. The clash between politics and technology and the question of identity are crucial aspects that drive political expressionism. Increased dependence on newer technologies is also becoming more prevalent both from the civilian and governmental level putting them both at risk should internet shutdowns take place.

A recent article in the *Harvard Business Review* placed emphasis on five qualities which may lead to positive outcomes in social movements. These key points tend to overlap with different observations made throughout the course of this research. The only major point of disagreement concerns what happens after a regime is toppled; the *Review* argues that the social movement is responsible for planning the establishment of new forms of governance.<sup>61</sup> I would contend that such expectations are beyond the basic responsibility of a social movement operating as a tool to establish conditions for change, since it is the people who are responsible for planning the ultimate outcome. It also is important to consider the successful behaviors described in the article as part of the micro goals building into the macro goals as described earlier.

<sup>61</sup> Greg Satell and Srdja Popovic, “How Protests Become Successful Social Movements” last modified January 27, 2017. <https://hbr.org/2017/01/how-protests-become-successful-social-movements>.

The author explains that there are five steps: 1. clear definition of change, 2. shift the spectrum of allies, 3. identify the pillars of power, 4. seek to attract, not to overpower, 5. build a plan to survive victory.<sup>62</sup> They explained a definition for change is required that neither be too stringent but open enough to be executed properly.<sup>63</sup> When it came to the spectrum of allies they explained it is important to have a strong set of supporters where agreed upon values are established not via compromise but are genuine ideals others are willing to support.<sup>64</sup> Identifying the pillars of power involved and knowing which are the battles to pick and who is the real opponent is the third step.<sup>65</sup> “Seeking to attract” involves finding the right cause to bring everyone together without turning away potential participants.<sup>66</sup> Finally, planning to survive victory is defined as a necessary course of action to fill in the political void which follows an effective overthrow.<sup>67</sup> This is perhaps the most complex yet rewarding step in the process; to obtain stability after accomplishing an overthrow. If any one of these elements is missing it is possible a social movement may be weakened or slowed to a halt altogether.

To define change, the concept of “a people” should be clear, they may be one people, or more than one; how they perceive themselves in turn affects their relations with others. To define change there must be a desire, stemming from whom is requesting it; if they do not know what they want then there will not be a strong enough impetus to drive the social movement forward. This is where the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong was somewhat limited in its capacity to spread, given that its impetus applies to a select group of people whom belong to SARs (Special

<sup>62</sup> Greg Satell and Srdja Popovic, “How Protests Become Successful Social Movements.”

<sup>63</sup> Satell and Popovic.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.



Administrative Regions) and the overall capacity to spread would be limited to Macau and Taiwan, a separate controversy onto itself. The Umbrella Movement is thus confined to SARs and would not likely expand beyond that point unless there is a cause which represents the people of China more broadly. At issue is the grace period between the time power was relinquished from the United Kingdom where the SARs are entitled to keep certain privileges for a limited time before the PRC (People's Republic of China) will gain full socio-political control. The rest of China is already under control under the PRC and did not experience life outside that rule, therefore, little motivation exists to associate with the Umbrella Movement. This is the major difference between the Umbrella Movement and the protest in Tiananmen Square, which had nationwide appeal and purpose.

When shifting a spectrum of allies, if there is a conflict of identity or purpose then breakdowns or lack of complete potential tends to occur. In Egypt there was not a unified people, but rather unified groups of people who organized a successful overthrow of Mubarak. However, the disagreements following his removal from power among the people led to complications. . In Iran, different uprisings represented select groups, some more massive than others. It has yet to be seen when all social classes, educated populations and various political ranks will combine to form a newer, more effective uprising. With certain groups being absent from the cause the potential to accomplish the main goal of removing the regime is weakened significantly.

“Identifying the pillars of power” is an interesting step in that a reference was made to the Otpor! Movement, which sought to overthrow Milosevic. It is important to choose who to target when protesting, and the protesters saw police as potential allies rather than enemies and viewed

arrests as a way to get to know law enforcement better.<sup>68</sup> When the time came for law enforcement to shoot at protesters or join them, they became part of the movement. This was not the case in other social movements, for example when we saw Bahrainis using Molotov cocktails against the police. Had they managed to get the police on their side, perhaps the outcome may have been different.

Attracting and not overpowering is a significant factor in how unity under anger can only last so long and tends to be reactionary at best. The *Green Movement*, although formed in reaction to corrupt elections, is based on the attraction of people to a nation of Iran of their own, from as far back as 1905. This led to several manifestations and uprisings at various points in time, united under this worthy cause. There is the hope that one day Iran will belong to its people and not be manipulated and abused by a select group of people who have all the power.

The article claims the last and perhaps most important goal for a social movement to be successful is the plan for surviving victory. Often a social movement may not have the right people to lay out a comprehensive post-revolution plan. The focus should be on working with people of all ranks, getting the support from government defectors, law enforcement, and the military, among others. This is not necessarily something done by plan but rather just requires the people be motivated enough afterward to form a path toward stability. If there is too much infighting, volatility will ensue, even the best plan can fall apart when there is insufficient support.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

It is worth noting there is an increased frequency of peaceful uprisings, yet there is the potential for movements to develop that take a violent turn, as with the rise of the Islamic State (IS) radical theocratic organization. Just as peaceful concepts and visions can travel at a rapid pace with the assistance of ICTs, so can violent propaganda and lies. There is an impasse of sorts in which now there is so much information available online, such a high abundance of data, that lies and truth co-exist on a level where sometimes fact and fiction become almost indistinguishable.

The long-term, macro outcome is what most social movements depend upon: usually removing a government or certain elements of a government's policies from power. In the absence of accomplishing that macro goal, the question then arises as to what did those movements accomplish if they did not create a shift in power. As seen in Egypt and Ukraine a shift in power, although a clear and important success, needs unequivocal support from people from all levels in society to create long lasting stability. Depending on how people act can lead to as much chaos or worse, instead of the change they desire. This was the case in Bahrain and Syria, where violent outcomes resulted from peaceful manifestations in reaction to the onslaught of violence brought on by their respective governments.

It must also be taken into consideration that these are major infrastructure overhauls. Therefore another standard of analysis should be applied which is not as stringent as the Western model. The expectations ought to be different for a movement like the Battle of Seattle which is not under an oppressive regime and the micro goals thus require much more scrutiny in relation to macro goals. Recent social movements in the Middle East are dealing with three issues: the absence of stable governments, religious extremism and fragmented, often divided societies. The

peoples' desires often are a combination of removing a government from power and seeking a stability which they never experienced after growing up and being accustomed to systemic governmental abuse. This ties back into defining a people and looking at context to best understand what exactly a social movement is looking for. When there is an issue of who the people are and how they perceive themselves, matters become further complex in attempting to decipher a social movement, success of its goals and motivations of its peoples.

## CHAPTER 3: 18 TIR AND THE *GREEN MOVEMENT*

### Historical Overview and Emergence

This section provides a general overview and analysis of historical-political manifestations in Iran over the past century. It explores the understudied history behind trends in Iranian social movements while evaluating their resonance with contemporary social movements worldwide. A new media frontier was set forth by ICTs, altering the ways activists demonstrate resistance in Iran fueled by a longstanding intergenerational unrest to have control of the government returned to the hands of its civilians. The historical, social, and political conditions that led to the *Green Movement* and its application of ICTs led to new forms of mobilization and communication unlike the world had ever witnessed.

Iran's modern history of social movements begins in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the 1905-1911 Mashrūtiyyat Revolution (Constitutional Revolution) that established a constitution and parliament. At the time there was a monarchy that had too much control over society. During the Constitutional Revolution, King Mohammad Ali Shah ordered the shelling of parliament, killing many important figures inside. In reaction, civilians armed themselves in self-defense. The revolutionaries came from the East, North East, and North Iran to Tehran where they removed him from power.-This was the first major Iranian revolution during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and resulted in the first constitution in Iran created by the public. Moreover, it was the first of its kind created in Asia during that time.<sup>69</sup> Though it was a different time and context, this social

<sup>69</sup> Robin Wright, *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World with a New Concluding Chapter by the Author*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 92.

movement serves as a vantage point to illustrate the extent of people's desire for social justice and how it has been transmitted between generations. The objective was to break away from monarchical rule and return power to the people in the most egalitarian way possible, establishing a working symbolic framework of society. There was a transition away from one person implementing mandates to people starting to run the government. Iranians abroad (typically of elite background) witnessed rapid developments in Europe and compared them to Iran's development. Many people believed for there to be significant change, the King's power needed to be limited and the country operated based on a parliamentary system.

The hope was that by removing the monarchy from power, the people would be able to industrialize Iran at a more contemporary pace, and the nation might head in the direction of democratization by creating a House of Representatives. If the monarchy was only symbolic, or at least held less control, then the people could be more involved as part of the political process. It is difficult to pinpoint one main factor that set off the entire revolution, and it is certain there was more than one. By excluding people from the political process, the monarchy shaped the course of events which transpired in the 1905 Constitutional Revolution. Because of this dynamic, people seeking an equal distribution of political power during this revolution set the trend for all Iranian social movements to follow. The only major difference in the movements that followed was their explicit emphasis on nonviolence. It was the opportunity for the public in Iran to exercise their voice; a venue for people to express their determination to keep power from being abused by a select set of individuals.

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Not only did this set political precedent, but it is also one of a few chief examples that indicate that when political activities and change happens in Iran, chances are it will affect other parts of the world, in particular the rest of the Middle East. Robin Wright, a renowned journalist on foreign affairs, described Iran as a trendsetter in the Islamic world.<sup>70</sup> Since that time other protests and events have taken place as contention became a regular occurrence in Iran. Some decades later the protests of 30 Tir, in 1952, occurred when people were outraged at the news of the forced-resignation of Iran's prime minister, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, who espoused secular democratic values.. Then 16 Azar, now known as Students' Day, became the first major student-led event in recent Iranian social movement history on December 7th, 1953. The movement took place after the 1953 coup, which ousted prime minister Mossadegh. Tehran University students supporting Mossadegh protested during Vice-President Nixon's visit and three of them died in the process. The students were Ahmad Ghandchi, Mehdi Shariat-Razavi, and Mostafa Bozorg-Nia, and this day became dedicated to them. Mossadegh exemplified the theme of adequate representation with his emphasis on principles of human rights and secular democracy.

Then came the 1979 Revolution that overthrew the monarchist regime of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi. Unexpectedly, the 1979 uprising resulted in the usurpation of power by the theocratic Islamic Republic of Iran espousing extremist Islamist values based on Sharia law. However, not surprisingly, the heavy-handed theocratic regime quickly engendered its opposition. It did not take long for their outrageous and abusive policies to provoke future uprisings seeking their removal from power.

<sup>70</sup> Wright, 92.

The Cultural Revolution took place between May 1981 and October 1984, with activists representing parties from leftist to liberal and nationalists. Students were active in the university during the time of revolution but represented specific parties. During the Cultural Revolution the Islamic Republic of Iran shuttered universities for 32 months<sup>71</sup>. The regime believed that student activities were a potential source of dissidence and sought to stop it at the source. After the Revolution, such student groups were dissolved and were not permitted to assemble in public, save for the regime's Office for Consolidating Unity (OCU), or *Daftar Tahkim Vahdat*.

According to Dr. Misagh Parsa from Dartmouth College:

The government expelled thousands of students and faculty during the cultural revolution. The number of university students dropped from 174,217 to 117,148, according to Amnesty International. Authorities dismissed some 3,500 university faculty-- nearly one-half of the teaching staff--- deemed liberal, leftist or antigovernment. One government official boasted that while he served as minister of education, nearly twenty thousand primary and secondary school teachers were fired. Nearly four thousand students involved in political activities against the regime were executed or killed by the government between 1981 and 1985. The Cultural Revolution Council, with Khomeini's approval, conducted a thorough review of university curricula to ensure that Islamic laws and precepts were being taught. When the universities reopened in fall 1982, all students were required to take courses on Islam, taught primarily by clergy<sup>72</sup>

This excerpt illustrates the extreme conditions experienced by Iranians during that time. Not only were people's educational paths disrupted, but this was an attempt at redefining the educational system to suit the regime's interests. As a consequence, thousands of innocent individuals were killed, imprisoned or tortured by the Islamic Republic of Iran to further their extremist agenda and embed themselves more in people's lives. By mixing religion with education, it became more difficult for students to share their thoughts or express themselves as

<sup>71</sup> Misagh Parsa, *Democracy in Iran: Why it Failed and How it Might Succeed*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 181.

<sup>72</sup> Parsa, 182.



any action could be considered in violation of religious principles and therefore a threat against the state itself. That era changed the atmosphere of oppression to accelerate the establishment of the regime's legitimacy as a governmental power. Universities, once a place for self-expression, cultural and educational development, turned into a breeding ground for religious extremism and militaristic ideologies. These developments created an atmosphere which allowed the Basiji<sup>73</sup> to later form.

During this time the OCU was functioning under extremist principles; they are well known for occupying the United States embassy and keeping people hostage for 444 days from November 4, 1979 to January 21, 1981. Those actions had both internal and external impacts; it damaged democratic movements within Iran and made way for fundamentalist groups to gain support. Additionally, it helped in part to get Ronald Reagan elected. But during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami, a reformist candidate elected in 1997, the OCU transitioned away from functioning as a radical group and became a reformist one instead. Interestingly, they were among one of the key groups that helped him get elected in the first place, which suggests the OCU likely began to develop reformist leanings at an earlier time under Islamic Republic rule. After *18 Tir*, the group became independent removed the main ties to the government, and took on a position supportive of pro-democratic principles.

Less than two decades after the founding of the Islamic Republic, the *18 Tir* uprising occurred, in July of 1999. 50,000 participants in the streets of Tehran and thousands in all major universities across Iran demanded radical change, based on human rights and secular democratic

<sup>73</sup> A semi-military group under the supervision of the Revolutionary Guard, a military force created after the 1979 revolution, which have offices located all over Universities nationwide and still exists to date.

principles. In Tehran, students were killed in their dormitories by the regime in retaliation. The scene is described thus:

We woke to the fanatic cries of those who attacked the dorms. They shouted the name of God before landing blows that elicited screams from our fellow students. The sudden, shocking sound of gunshots rang out between the buildings, and the crashing of breaking glass and terror reverberated within the campus walls...As the attacks continued, they became more brutal. We knew they were likely looking for us, or those who sympathized with us. As in any group based on fundamentalist ideology, the Ansar-e Hezbollah feel justified in taking licenses that go far beyond the realm of social justice or human rights. We listened that night as they screamed curses at students in the name of God, crashing into rooms indiscriminately, terrorizing whomever they found behind the dormitory walls. They carried batons, swords, and guns, and there seemed to be anywhere from three to four hundred of them.<sup>74</sup>

Several students of *18 Tir* sacrificed their lives for freedom, including Ezat Ebrahimnejad, who was killed that night during the dormitory attacks and was the only death officially recognized by the government.<sup>75</sup> Several students had also disappeared, including Fereshteh Alizadeh, Tara Haami, and Saeed Zinalli.<sup>76</sup> Later an associated activist, Akbar Mohammadi, who was imprisoned for his activities in the movement, reportedly died in prison from a hunger strike. Another example of questionable death includes Afshin Osanloo who died in prison on June 20, 2013. However, neighboring prisoners recount these events differently, believing the government killed Mohammadi after years of torture; “Akbar’s legacy in the student movement was that he came to signify torture by the Islamic Republic”.<sup>77</sup> *18 Tir* was the first large-scale social movement in 20 years for the post-revolution generation, compared to

<sup>74</sup> Reza Mohajerinejad and Liz Malon, *Live Generation*, (iUniverse, 2010), 1.

<sup>75</sup> Misagh Parsa, *Democracy in Iran: Why it Failed and How it Might Succeed*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 2016. 199.

<sup>76</sup> Parsa, *Democracy in Iran*, 197.

<sup>77</sup> “Death of Afshin Osanloo in the Iranian Prison,” *Focus Iran*, *Amnesty International UK* online <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/blogs/focus-iran/death-afshin-osanloo-iranian-prison>

previous protests in Iran's history. The participants' aim was to speak out against the torture, prisons, censorship, regulation of speech, government surveillance and to challenge the entire system. This was similar to the 1988 student movements in Burma and the 1989 student movements in Tiananmen Square in China in that they demanded governmental systems based on democracy. The *18 Tir* movement could be considered the last massive student movement based on TCMs to reach relatively high numbers during the 20th century. This uprising, composed almost exclusively of university students, helped attract attention to the atrocious nature of the events that followed the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although such contention was considered impossible in times past, this social movement changed the relationship between students and society, instilling in people the belief and hope of being capable to remove a regime. The *18 Tir* uprising was based on TCMs, including print, phone, and in-person meetings. ICTs at the time were not an option, since they were not widespread enough in Iran unlike the Battle of Seattle, which took place that same year but was able to pioneer ICT usage for mobilization. Services like e-mail were not used by the general public in Iran, as availability was very limited and known only to people in sectors such as engineering. After lasting for five days, it did not take long for the *18 Tir* mobilization to become quashed by the Islamic Republic of Iran. This however did not destroy the driving force that made the *18 Tir* student uprising possible in the first place.

For the first time in the 20 years since the Islamic Republic of Iran was established, a new generation of people was expressing their demands to not continue living under the theocratic rule of a ruthless regime and falling in line with the historical demand for democracy. The majority of the people in Iran did not want to live within the confines of this regime; they wanted

to have a secular democracy and freedom without influence from the Islamic Republic or any regime based on ideologies. There was and is today a minority that do not want major change known as reformists, they have a different understanding of transformation, of the sort von Stein spoke of, and instead of demanding fundamental change toward secular democracy, they only want to reform certain policies under the Islamic Republic.

As a result of the student uprising in *18 Tir*, the political climate in universities changed. The reformist student group OCU took a more independent and progressive path because student criticism of the government was more widespread and acceptable. Consequently, the structure of reformist groups shifted toward democratization. Furthermore, *18 Tir* set the stage for new movements like the women's movement, labor movement, and teacher's movement, among others.

The end goal of *18 Tir*, to establish a secular democracy and remove the Islamic Republic of Iran from power, was not accomplished over the course of its peak participation. Regardless, there were many structural changes and influences over different ideological spheres. This period exemplifies the continuation of people's desire to exert control over politics in spite of all the possible restrictions in place; the menacing oppressive strength of the Islamic Republic of Iran meant nothing to the social activists who would risk everything to make sure their demands were met.

### ***The Green Movement***

Barely ten years after the *18 Tir* movement, the 2009 elections were held in Iran. They ended with the selection of a presidential candidate which vast sectors of the Iranian population were opposed to. Massive numbers of people were motivated to take to the streets and speak their minds, asking the question, “Where is my Vote?” It was a time where political participation and interest in Iran was at a measurable high with one of the greatest voter turnout in nation’s recent history, said to be around 85%.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, elections in Iran have not been free since the first president, Abolhassan Banisadr, was elected in 1980, after the 1979 revolution. He subsequently was ousted by Khomeini and his cohorts. There were two major reformist candidates in 2009: Mir-Hossein Mousavi, the former prime minister during the Iran-Iraq war, and former speaker of the house, Mehdi Karubi. The two conservative candidates were then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mohsen Rezaee, who was the former commander of the revolutionary guard from 1980 to 1997. The televised debates were watched by approximately 40 to 50 million viewers. Each time there was a debate, it drew public attention to pressing issues and Iranians would come out to the streets to show support for their belief in change. The population of Iran at the time was 73.20 million<sup>79</sup>, which indicates that more than half of the population was keeping a close eye on the unfolding political landscape. In order to qualify for a presidential position, one must be male, a believer in Islam, more specifically Shia Islam, and one must believe in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Supreme Leader. Based on these

<sup>78</sup> "Iran Population," *Indexmundi* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://www.indexmundi.com/iran/population.html>

<sup>79</sup> Robert F. Worth and Nazila Fathi, "Protests Flare in Tehran as Opposition Disputes Vote," *New York Times* online, last modified June 13, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/14/world/middleeast/14iran.html>

principles those individuals will then be approved or rejected by the guardian council, which has 12 members that are selected by the supreme leader by direct and indirect means. For presidential elections, the council must choose from several candidates, filtering them down to 4 on the ballot. A chief reason why Karoubi and Mousavi were even able to get on the ballot, regardless of their vision for reform, was because they were insiders due to their previous background with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mousavi in particular became a symbol of hope for the people as he was able to manage resources despite the harms brought on by the economic sanctions and the difficulties that ensued from the Iran-Iraq war. He returned to politics after a 20-year hiatus between 1989 and 2009 as an important figure in recent public memory. His vision was not the same as the majority about democracy, but people chose him to institute reform and change the dynamic of power under the supreme leader toward democratization. His past performance coupled with his promise of change toward democratization turned him into more than a presidential candidate but a major public figure within the *Green Movement*. Mousavi's message upon announcing his candidacy was geared first toward helping the poor. However, as he began to see the citizens' demands (predominantly youth and middle class) for respect of human rights and democracy, the scope of his message became broader as time progressed to not just help the economically marginalized, but supporting the desires of Iranian society as a whole.

Mousavi and Karoubi talked about what they wanted to do for the young people of Iran, becoming influential sources of motivation for the majority of Iran's population (whom were youth) to demand change.

Mousavi's message reached large sections of Iranian society and in particular those from urban areas. His message became more expansive and thereby inclusive of groups in urban areas, youth, and the middle class. He became the people's symbolic leader for change; the challenger who was against lies by the establishment and another presidential term of Ahmadinejad. Mousavi became a voice for the people who wanted to speak out in opposition to the supreme leader.

The presidential debate brought more attention to issues that concerned them and as a result of this, major sectors of society became more progressive as these problems were becoming publicized nationwide. At first the message of Mousavi was to attempt to achieve social justice by smaller reforms, but over time he began to request demands more parallel to the those of the people; widening the gap between him and the hardliners in power.

Following the debate, there was chanting in the streets before the elections, demonstrating a significant amount of offline gathering as well. Many people were frustrated, since they felt Ahmedinejad did not represent the country and will be the source for more conflict. There emerged peaceful protests of constructive contention by the Mousavi supporters and spiteful protests of destructive contention on the part of Ahmedinejad supporters. The revolutionary guard engineered the election and accused Mousavi of stirring insurrection for a coup against the current regime. Karoubi called attention to the 2005 elections being rigged in favor of Ahmadinejad by arguing that the election result was engineered by the son of Khamenei Mojtaba and the revolutionary guard. Mousavi and Karoubi were concerned about corruption and thus created a committee to keep an eye on the outcome of the elections. Increased vigilance on how

elections were being managed in Iran motivated people to share the same investigative interest during the 2009 elections.

Mousavi was viewed as the answer for people who wanted Iran to be liberated from economic sanctions toward freedom and democratization. Mousavi was seen as a stepping-stone to shift away from radicalism and move toward more tangible change. Supporters believed this election could bring about more respect for human dignity, an emphasis on national interest, develop the country based on human rights values and adopt a prosperous international policy with the world and the United States. Another unique aspect of these elections under the Islamic Republic was the role of the candidate's wife throughout the campaign; she was seen holding hands with Mousavi and supported him standing by his side publicly on multiple occasions. This was unusual behavior for a candidate's partner in the Islamic Republic. Such actions were indicative of positive changes for women in Iran and that there were more to come.

Karoubi, after the peak of the *Green Movement* on July 29th, 2009, revealed to the public in an open letter the detainment of innocent protesters who were being sexually abused and killed in the Kahrizak prison<sup>80</sup>. This was a landmark moment; a piece of crucial information was admitted by someone who served under the Islamic Republic of Iran and who in the past assumed a prominent position as speaker of the house. This regime had been practicing torture as a means to silence opposition for decades and denied it on a regular basis, accusing people of making up allegations. This was an important moment in the movement for change, circulating to all parts of Iranian society; even those who were among the elite and connected to the government were speaking out, putting their careers and lives at risk.

<sup>80</sup> Borzou Daraghi, "Iran roiled by prison abuse claims," *Los Angeles Times* online, last modified August 12, 2009, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/aug/12/world/fg-iran-abuse12>



To most people in Iran a vote for Ahmadinejad was equated with Khamenei and therefore not seen as a viable option. Many people at the time believed that Mousavi was the candidate of choice from available options to replace Ahmadinejad. Mousavi seemed like the best candidate who could meet most of his supporter's demands at the time. The government attempted to portray these elections in such a way that if a person did not vote for Ahmadinejad they were not supporting the supreme leader and therefore, dishonoring the state.

As people began to garner support to stand by their belief that Mousavi was the right choice, the color green became a symbolic part of this movement. It represented freedom, the people's desires, and human rights. This is the type of situation where semiotics likely plays a significant role in the expansion of a social movement to gain a following. The green color was redefined with its meaning typically associated with cultural, historical and religious identities. It then began to represent people's hope for a different future, one that is not plagued with the problems of the present. People can gravitate more easily toward the *Green Movement's* cause with this type of imagery and its message.

Four days before the election, on June 8, people banded together to form a 25-kilometer human chain (*Zangieret Ensani*) in Valiasr Street from Rahahan Square in South Tehran (in a poverty stricken area) to Tajrish Square in North Tehran (in an affluent area), consisting of approximately 150,000 to 200,000 people and 12,000 cars in Valiasr street (known as Pahlavi street before the 1979 revolution).

On election day, the fraudulent nature of the vote was much more pronounced compared to times past as evidenced by, "the official announcement that Ahmadinejad was declared the winner with more than 60 percent of the votes, although voting continued for about two more

hours”<sup>81</sup>. In many areas the number of votes did not match up with the number of residents in their respective regions.<sup>82</sup> There were multiple cases of interference with the elections on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran, giving people several reasons to question the outcome of 2009’s alleged results. The following day, challenging this blatant corruption, people came out to the streets asking, “Where is my vote?” (*raye man kojast?*); they were asking Mousavi to take back the people’s votes. After June 12, people continued to chant on the streets because the revolutionary guard managed to rig, orchestrate, and corrupt the election. In response to their reaction, Ahmadinejad characterized the protesters as, “*khas o khashak*” (“dust and trash”) for his supporters, meaning that the threat they posed to the regime was not serious.<sup>83</sup> Following that statement the regime attacked dormitories in Tehran University (the same ones where the *18 Tir* attacks occurred) and students were violently killed on the evening of June 14, out of fear the *Green Movement* could gain enough momentum to accomplish its goals.<sup>84</sup> The aim of the regime was to destroy the hope of students who were a major engine for contention as they participated in continuous protests from June 13th to the 20th. On June 15, during the peak of the massive protests, Mousavi came out for the first time after the elections and gave his speech, stating that they will continue protesting until their votes are recounted. This was the largest protest of the *Green Movement*, but was held in silence (known in Farsi as *rahpeimaiye sokoot*). He claimed the elections were unjust and rigged, and requested people to remain non-violent, so the

<sup>81</sup> Parsa, *Democracy in Iran*, 248.

<sup>82</sup> Oral history.

<sup>83</sup> Parsa, 211.

<sup>84</sup> Sahand, "Attacking Tehran University Dormitory" last modified June 15, 2009, <http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-272199>

government would have no excuse blame activists. That same day, 19-year-old Mousavi supporter Sohrab Arabi was one of the notable victims killed.

During the June 19 Friday prayer Khamenei made a speech, stating if there is bloodshed the opposition is responsible. He defended Ahmadinejad's statements again by claiming the election was clean and no changes would be made, and that the guardian council did exactly the right thing. On June 20, soon after the speech, people came to the street where many were shot and killed; among the most well known death was that of Neda Agha-Soltane. Another momentous request made to the Iranian public by Mousavi was on July 9, 2009, on the 10th anniversary of July 1999 student uprising, where he asked students to hold protests all over country in commemoration of the past event. In an open letter he explained that if the July 1999 attackers were reprimanded in a proper way we would not have a repeat of this disaster on a larger scale today.<sup>85</sup> This statement illustrates a strong point of continuity between the two social movements in terms of shared goals and struggles. People who were not part of the July 1999 movement began to show their support during the 2009 *Green Movement*. Even the style of slogans as the movement progressed became increasingly more specific, making revolutionary demands for example when people started to exclaim, "Esteghlal, Azadi, Jomhuri Irani" meaning Independent, Freedom, Iranian Republic which is in clear opposition of the Islamic Republic's very foundation. Furthermore, after the overthrow of Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt. Iranians were taking to the streets exclaiming "Mubarak, Ben Ali noobate toost Seyd Ali" or, "Mubarak, Ben Ali both are overthrown, now it is your turn Seyd Ali Khamenei." The people's voice becomes more vocal and clear about their demands showing a

<sup>85</sup> Kaleme, "Bayaniye Shomare 8 Mir-Hossein Mousavi, میرحسین موسوی 8بیانیہ شماره" last modified June 25, 2009. <http://kaleme.com/1388/04/04/klm-8792/>

significant departure from the original slogan of “Where is my vote?” This hints at much deeper underlying factors which the people are concerned about, going beyond the initial requests by becoming more specific and revolutionary.

Interestingly, over the course of the events that transpired, a unique phenomenon began to emerge that does not appear to be present in social movement theory in which activists avail from what I would describe as “Co-Optive Expression” of legally sanctioned protests of a different cause for their own means. These situations are unique in that a public activity condoned by the regime is re-appropriated by activists. For example, if they are supposed to do an activity in large numbers supported or approved by the regime, then the opposition would modify the activity to disseminate a different message. Modifications include changes in the way people dress, altering the chants, or using completely different chants altogether. The power of Co-Optive Expressionism lies in is the element of surprise that it brings. Given the consistent record of this type of behavior in the past, it will be likely to happen in the future as well.

On June 17, all of Iran wanted to support their qualification world cup in South Korea, however at least six players showed their support by wearing green wristbands: *Ali Karimi, Mehdi Mahdavi kia, Javad Nekonam, Masoud Shojaee, Hosien Kabi, and Mohammad Nosrati*.<sup>86</sup> Another occasion where protesters managed to co-opt was a sanctioned protest; Quds day (last Friday of the Ramadan holy month) to express themselves as they did not have a permit to mobilize. The typical purpose of Quds day is for propaganda, taking place on the last Friday of Ramadan every year to show solidarity with the Muslim world and Palestine through feigned

<sup>86</sup> Glen Levy, "Soccer Protest: Iran's Players Show Support for Mousavi" last modified June 17, 2009. <http://keepingscore.blogs.time.com/2009/06/17/soccer-protest-irans-players-show-support-for-mousavi/>

protests of support. People believe this showcase is not about peace or supporting Palestine but for the Islamic Republic of Iran to take advantage of the situation for their own gain. The Islamic Republic of Iran also supports groups which espouse violent ideologies rather than promote peace and people's rights. Many civilians feel that this is a major misappropriation of government funds as it did not accomplish what it purported to do for decades which was to help make peace and independence possible for the Palestinian people, but on the contrary because of their inflammatory rhetoric resulted with more violence and division. However, when it was co-opted, people took to the streets dressed in green chanting, "No Gaza, no Lebanon our life is for Iran". People use Co-Optive Expressionism as a way to speak their minds. Quds day is normally an opportunity for government supporters to chant against another governments, where the Basiji would yell, "Down with the US, down with Israel," but here the opposition exclaimed instead, "Down with dictator" and "Down with Russia". This protesting was done with the objective to dissuade future forms of the type of relationship where the Russian government supports the Islamic Republic of Iran and Ahmedinejad. This type of Co-Optive Expressionism shows the people's vision was based on a national, rather than ideological, interest. Also, during the anniversary of the US embassy take over on November 4, 2009, alongside the usual pro-government chants there were slogans against the Islamic Republic of Iran where activists exclaimed "Down with Dictator" and shared vocal support for political prisoners.

On December 19th, 2009 Ayatollah Hussein-Ali Montazeri, (a former deputy of the supreme leader Khomeini) died. Khomeini removed Montazeri from power because of his criticizing the regime for the killing of thousands of political prisoners and that they were given an unfair judicial process. After Khomeini's death, Khamenei became the supreme leader and

placed Montazeri on house arrest between 1997 and 2003 because of his speech about freedom, in which he criticized the supreme leader in *Qom* (*Qom* is one of the major holy cities for Shia adherents in Iran, the equivalent of the Vatican, except *Qom* is used for political purposes). Because of his oppositional stance and support for the *Green Movement* people showed an outpour of empathy. The people used that as a venue to make their demands for change in Iran known and share their solidarity for the *Green Movement* out in the open. Despite government pressure and attempts to suppress possible upheavals, mourners came out in large numbers protesting; around tens of thousands in Qom exclaiming “death to dictator”.<sup>87</sup>

Out of all these unique manifestations of Co-Optive Expressionism, December 27th, 2009 Ashura (a major holy day for most Shia followers) stands out in particular because of how followers of the *Green Movement* started to become more outspoken. Failed reform became a focal point for them, taking on a more revolutionary mode of action because the primary goal of most participants was not met. Activists chose the middle of the festivities on this day as the best time to showcase the *Green Movement* and transmit its message, by chanting and making themselves known nationally and internationally. During Ashura, chanting against the regime, the protesters exclaimed, “This month is blood month and Khamenei will go down.”<sup>88</sup>. By taking on *Co-Optive Expressionist* approach, activists were able to attract attention that otherwise would be difficult to obtain by surprising the public with the timing and vocal nature of their protests.

<sup>87</sup> "Iran cleric's funeral turns to opposition protest," *Associated Press* online, last modified December 21, 2009, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2009/dec/21/iran-clerics-funeral-turns-opposition-protest/247352/>.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Tait, "Nine deaths in bloody clashes at Ashura mourning ceremony in Tehran" last modified December 27, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/27/iran-protests-tehran-ashura-ceremony>

That day the regime killed several people in very brutal ways. This was a tipping point that demonstrated the Islamic Republic of Iran did not have respect for its civilians, even during Ashora. Those actions exemplified to many how they will stop at nothing to punish anyone they desire in any manner they like. It was a telling day where the regime's true character was starting to show in very clear and disturbing ways. Many religious Iranians were alarmed by these behaviors and their opinions changed about the regime. It was on this day that the Iranian government lost many supporters because of what happened. Former supporters could see the *Green Movement* remained non-violent in the midst of the regime's atrocious actions.

After the incident at Ashora, the *Green Movement* became more progressive and more openly expressed its desires to remove the Islamic Republic of Iran from power. From that point onward the *Green Movement* began to emphasize its more vocal rhetoric. Since the government did not return the people's missing votes, practiced systemic suppression, and was in persistent denial of rigging the election, the people lost their hope of reform and peaceful revolution became the only option to obtain freedom. This accurately reflects the type of circumstance von Stein discussed; revolution is likely to take place when reform is not an option. When people's voices and questions are being answered with violence, they will not be able to settle for moderate change.

Another significant date includes February 11th (22 Bahman) during the anniversary of the Islamic Republic, when the opposition exercised *Co-Optive Expressionism* by using that space to make their demands. It was an important day for the government where there are many foreign journalists and media focusing on Iran. Activists used it as a way to call attention to the

*Green Movement* to garner support for political prisoners, freedom of expression and demand for democracy.

On February 14th, 2011, there was opposition in the streets chanting against the government and the supreme leader in the first big anti-government protest contemporaneous to the *Arab Spring*, bringing in more positive energy for people within Iran. Many of the Basiji militia lost their confidence and covered their faces, fearing protesters and afraid that the regime could be removed, especially because of the increased motivation for revolutionary protests in the region post-*Green Movement* and *Arab Spring*. On February 28th Mousavi requested solidarity with Egypt and Tunisia to bring in more positive energy for the *Green Movement*. The Islamic Republic of Iran then arrested Mousavi and his wife, Zahra Rahnavard Karoubi, and his wife Fatimeh Karoubi. Later, Fatimeh Karoubi was released, however everyone else remains on house arrest.

This is the type of situation where rhizomes can flourish and exemplify their non-linear nature. Although the *Green Movement* started in 2009, the *Arab Spring* gave activists in Iran a newfound hope for the future. There can be a relation where the two movements in theory could feed off of each other, whether by direct or indirect means. It appears there was little to no direct collaborations between activists but it becomes evident that there were a lot of shared experiences including tactics, usage of ICTs, grassroots and decentralized mobilization. This illustrates that there are many micro-interactions that could have taken place that can easily be overlooked. For example, if the leader of the *Green Movement* is mentioning the idea of activists supporting each other across borders, much in the way of TANs but on an international level,



then it is likely that such rhetoric was repeated on other occasions in different places, though it would be difficult to keep track of or find due to the passage of time and censorship.

The actions of reformists within the *Green Movement* appeared to be headed toward becoming more inclusive and progressive after a few months, such as when they appealed to the small town working class. However, there was a setback in that reformists did not believe in secularism as part of the regime change. Reformists wanted the *Green Movement* to identify itself based on a structure that wants to reform the regime without removing it. This arrangement does not work, and the split to a certain extent contributed to the schisms that existed within the *Green Movement* and its overall organizational capacity and momentum. Nevertheless, majority of the Iranians wanted the regime to cease operating altogether. Because of attempts made by the reformists to alter the *Green Movement's* rhetoric to suit their agenda, support for the reformists from the majority of Iranians began to decline, making the movement more exclusive rather than inclusive.

One key disadvantage that reoccurred throughout the *Green Movement* was that the way people came to the streets in massive numbers but often left by nightfall. It would then be questioned as to what sort of outcomes may be possible if the activists were to follow through with 24-hour continuous and vocal *Meydan Expressionism*. Silence was not enough, and the majority of the protests operated that way up until the latter months of the *Green Movement's* progression. June 15th, 2009 is a striking example of this where if at least 3 million protesters in Tehran and millions in other major cities chose to camp out and speak out, rather than remain silent, the overall outcome may have been different had events transpired in that way.

This time in terms of participants, besides university students there were additional members of the general public showing their support. Among them included the middle class and people from urban areas. During these major uprisings, it appeared that the *Bazaris* (merchants) class and people from rural areas were not participating as would be expected. Another group that was missing were laborers from industrial areas, the energy section specifically, oil or other zones essential to the economy. In part this could be due to preventative measures taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran, imposing penalties for merchants, intending to close down their businesses.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, support of Ahmadinejad and the regime in rural areas is in part due to his being portrayed as an advocate of social justice.<sup>90</sup> It could be argued that the absence of these two groups in part had an effect on reducing the *Green Movement*'s capacity to spread out to all regions of the country with an almost perfectly uniform coverage. Regardless, the *Green Movement* was the first movement of its magnitude in the Middle East and the world in conjunction with ICT usage during the 21st century. This was different to prior social movements which used ICTs on a broad level but did not reach massive numbers over short periods of time such as the Battle of Seattle and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. It must be noted that the Orange Revolution, despite not being on as large of a scale as more recent movements, was capable of meeting its long term goal of getting fair elections because they participated in *Meydan Expressionism* continuously until their goals became a reality. Only social movements that took place after the *Green Movement* were capable of massive mobilization within shorter periods of time. The importance of increased capacity to mobilize large numbers is the potential which exists under the right direction to accomplish long term

<sup>89</sup> Parsa *Democracy in Iran*, 92.

<sup>90</sup> Parsa, 132.

goals within a shorter period. The problem to consider with large numbers is that alone does not guarantee results without a solid direction and continuous presence, the sort which can exist when there is *Meydan Expressionism*. The *Green Movement* however, despite not removing the current government from power, showed the world that it is possible, even in the most brutal of circumstances there be the hope for toppling the regime where activists and their families are threatened with death by a repressive regime.

The Islamic Republic's government was plagued with problems since its inception under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the religious functionaries around him; according to Dr. Misagh Parsa of Dartmouth University, "The new Islamic regime resorted to unprecedented violence in order to maintain power. Khomeini not only repressed liberal nationalists and leftists, but also he had some of his own closest advisors and allies expelled from politics or killed. Although, during the revolutionary struggle prior to the overthrow of the Shah's rule, Khomeini had advocated freedom, independence, and social justice, once in power, he ultimately established a theocracy, which denied basic human freedoms to the Iranian people."<sup>91</sup> For nearly four decades this theocratic regime, based on Sharia law, has prevailed over Iran. To say that the regime has since been violating basic human rights on a regular basis would be an understatement. In reality, the potential for democratic developments in Iran have been disrupted a significant amount.

Several multilateral economic sanctions have been imposed on Iran for decades, not only crippling comprehensive development, but also detrimentally affecting people's lives. Civilians within Iran have faced a two-fold dilemma: neither their government nor the international

<sup>91</sup>Misagh Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of Iran, Nicaragua, and the Philippines*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.

community have been able or willing to provide help. Additionally, the regime misappropriated any funds within their reach as a means to maintain control over people's daily lives. According to Dr. Fakhreddin Azimi, this was an alarming situation: "The urban poor remained highly vulnerable. Demoralized and consumed by resentment and despair, they often gave in to anomie and addiction and showed a greater propensity for millenarian yearnings. By 2004 unemployment stood at 16 percent; the average monthly income was no more than \$100. The country's population of 70.7 million in 2005 had more than doubled since the inception of the Islamic regime, with some 70 percent below the age of thirty. Demographic growth and incessant rural migration exacerbated haphazard urbanization."<sup>92</sup> In short, Iran's capacity to develop as a nation has suffered major setbacks as a consequence of external sanctions and internal pressures.

Although the Islamic Republic of Iran managed to retain its dominant position, and despite many other challenges, these various conditions coupled with Iran's geopolitical isolation were factors which helped birth the *Green Movement*. Iranian masses tend to agitate for change on a small scale if they cannot organize massive uprisings as in the past, so long as they get closer to accomplishing their goals. These shifts in forms of resistance demonstrate the peoples' capacity to continue even after a movement's peak. Because of this, Iran's social movements became their global export. While some wonder whether the absence of major demonstrations in recent years implies the *Green Movement* is over, this research indicates that sometimes there is not a clear demarcation between the beginning and end of a social movement. When everyone thought *18 Tir* was finished, the *Green Movement* took place ten years later. This means people's desires remain even if the names and general structure of the movements change.

<sup>92</sup> Fakhreddin Azimi, *Quest for Democracy in Iran: a Century of Struggle Against Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 428.

During the 2017 May election season many people arrived at different political meetings in various cities countrywide dressed in green and chanting “Free Political Prisoners”, “Free Mousavi and Karoubi”, “This is our Clear Message, They Must be Free”, as well as other statements supporting the *Green Movement*.<sup>93</sup> These actions caused Rouhani to take a more empathetic stance, promising to resolve those issues and giving him a significant advantage over his opponent, Ebrahim Raisi, who represented the supreme leader, revolutionary guard and other hardliners. After eight years the messages of the *Green Movement* had remained embedded in society; this is a sign of continuing unrest establishing the capacity for potential future social movements.

### **Differences from 18 Tir**

The once insurmountable wall of state censorship appeared to be shaken on a massive scale during the dawn of the *Green Movement* in Iran. There was, however, one key weakness: the people of the *Green Movement* abandoned the protests at nightfall each day rather than persisting overnight in a vocal manner and on a continuous level as in *18 Tir* in the form of *Meydan Expressionism*. Ten years prior to the *Green Movement* protests, *18 Tir* produced 50,000 activists who were exclusively students in Tehran. Simultaneously, thousands of other students nationwide protested to support the students in Tehran and condemn the tragic night in the dormitory. Had the protest taken place during the regular school semester and not the summer, a higher number of students would have been part of the protest, increasing the chances of a more

<sup>93</sup> Thomas Erdbrink, "At Rouhani Rally, Daring Slogans and Reminders of Iran's Political Ghosts" last modified May 11, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/11/world/middleeast/iran-election-rouhani-khamenei.html>

effective movement. Their initial goals were more specific than those of the *Green Movement*: overthrowing the government and establishing a secular democracy. They did not attract the same level of attention on a national or international scale as the *Green Movement* given the absence of ICT platforms, but they persisted until the government used radical intervention to halt the activities of the *18 Tir* activists.

The *Green Movement* in particular illustrates the *Political Expressionist* mindset in its diverse use of resources. It also built upon the foundation of *Intergenerational Expression* where people from all ages adopt an open, hopeful outlook on change and take action to make it possible for newer generations. Major indicators of activities striving for *Intergenerational Expression* within a social movement include demonstrators continuing to find ways to express themselves regardless of the situation—even in the face of Internet shutdowns<sup>94</sup> or through co-option of a protest. These social movements evince the struggle of a newer generation and those who share the vision for change outside of the established paradigm. While the struggle for *Intergenerational Expression* in *18 Tir* was slightly more limited in its scope partly due to its exclusivity to university students, the *Green Movement* stands out in this respect because it attracted a broader audience from the middle class and urban areas as well. *18 Tir*'s rhizomatic impact on non-Iranians is difficult to measure, unlike the *Green Movement*, which was well known to both regional and global observers. Both movements were well known among Iranians, both those within Iran and those living abroad.

<sup>94</sup> Anita Gohdes, "Internet Shutdowns During Political Unrest Are Becoming Normal – And It Should Worry Us" last modified September 16, 2016. <https://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/09/16/Internet-shutdowns-during-political-unrest-are-becoming-normal-and-it-should-worry-us/>

Besides a drastic difference in the number of participants, additional factors such as the perception of space and how people choose to mobilize and communicate were considered. *18 Tir* took place during the same year as the Battle of Seattle, yet the former was organized mostly through TCMs such as print. For over a century of TCMs, Iranians have been struggling to establish a secular democratic nation. It began as the 1905 Constitutional Revolution (*Mashrūtiyyat* Revolution) establishing a parliament base and democratic system. Then, between 1951 and 1953, the government was a secular democracy under Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh until he was ousted by the CIA and MI5 in an orchestrated coup. Conditions under the autocratic rule of the Shah did not improve matters and created a pretext for the 1979 revolution which formed the Islamic Republic of Iran. Over time there was a fomenting of unrest that ended up manifesting via the *18 Tir* Movement and the subsequent *Green Movement*. These two movements share a generational difference; *18 Tir* took place post Iran-Iraq war, when the people's sentiments were more focused on immediate change, and the *Green Movement* in its early stages took on a more reformist stance on politics and did not put the chief priority on removing the Islamic Republic of Iran from power. The Iranian reformist model of change is an inflexible type of reform which expects to work with the Islamic Republic of Iran rather than establish a fair democracy in its place. Shortly after the *Green Movement* reached its peak, its position became more revolutionary with the goal of replacing the regime with a government which follows secular democratic principles.

The two movements in Iran share a common desire for a secular democracy based on human rights principles. The *Green Movement* would have a larger turnout, but the participants would go home after nightfall and most of the initial protests were conducted in silence or with

chants which did not demand regime change. By comparison, *18 Tir* participants were involved in a more comprehensive form of protest via *Meydan Expressionism* in which they took over a public square continuously day and night, being vocal about their demands for fundamental change. The issues of external and internal pressures were also factors which led to the two uprisings, among them multilateral economic sanctions and repressive government actions which the people could not tolerate. This first led to the emergence of *18 Tir*, in which the movement's demands were more concrete and when participants took to the streets they did so continuously and in a vocal manner, unlike the *Green Movement*. The *18 Tir* movement was more centralized in terms of leadership and secular democracy, and was composed exclusively of university students, unlike the Green Movement, which came from a much more diverse pool of participants.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the two was the introduction of ICTs and the mass dissemination of mobile devices which provided more flexibility in terms of access to communication and the World Wide Web. The last and most significant possible difference between the two social movements was *Meydan Expressionism*, present in *18 Tir* and absent from the *Green Movement*, with activists returning home after protesting for several hours. Despite coming out in large numbers, participants in the *Green Movement* did not remain in the spaces that they took possession of for a long enough time to accomplish their goals. The extent of what could be achieved is discussed in Chapter 5 when comparing the effects of such activity in similar social movements which surfaced in the region shortly after the *Green Movement*.

The proportion of ICT usage to TCMs was taken into consideration for measuring the degree to which a movement may be considered of the *Political Expressionist* nature, where ICT



usage must be greater than TCMs (ICTs > TCMs). The *Green Movement* would fall under the category of a *Political Expressionist* movement. *18 Tir* by contrast only included TCMs, even as it began with more revolutionary goals and more vocal demands for change. The rhetoric of the *Green Movement* consisted at first of “Where is my vote?” and gradually shifted toward a more revolutionary mentality where the people began asking, “Where is my Country?” instead.

The *Green Movement*’s scope of influence over time was much more far-reaching with its regional and international impact. Iranians from around the world were showing their support. Were it not for Mousavi and Karoubi being placed on house arrest when they were showing support for Egypt and Tunisia, a very different turn of events may have been possible, with the potential for strong solidarity between the *Green Movement* and the *Arab Spring*. The problem is often most research about the *Green Movement* and *Arab Spring* treats the two trends as independent of each other, yet they arose from similar conditions and reached massive numbers to a similar degree.

The issue of 24-hour *Meydan Expressionism* is important to consider, as the *Green Movement* would gain participants in waves, but the presence was not continuous. This limited their capacity for making change a reality. By comparison, although *18 Tir* had continuity over the course of five days straight, they did not have the massive numbers of participants necessary for an overthrow. Digressing to the size of the *Green Movement*, it demonstrates the power of people gathering around a single goal as demonstrated earlier in Grewal’s Network Power theory<sup>95</sup>. Although *18 Tir* had a single goal, it was difficult to execute due to lack of resources and overbearing government censorship. The rapid increase in participation at a faster rate

<sup>95</sup> Grewal, *Network power*, 20.

indicates that in the time between *18 Tir* and the *Green Movement* there is increasing frustration. This suggests that the underlying factors of unrest in conjunction with ICTs made it possible for millions of protesters to take to the streets in an instantaneous move. Not long after the rise of the record-breaking manifestations of the *Green Movement*, other types of protests sprung up across the region, also creating massive followings. Among these regions were Egypt (2011), Turkey (2013), and Hong Kong (2014). I posit that ICTs are not the only contributing factors to massive mobilizations, but as they continue to become more integrated into our daily lives so does their influence on politics.

ICTs can serve as a gateway towards understanding the evolution of social movements and they function as an important tool. These methods can be used to connect people in ways that previously were not possible during times dominated by TCMs, such as the sharing of tactics between social movements.<sup>96</sup> Unity across vast distances was a predominant feature of the *Green Movement*, making it possible to facilitate dialogues about a national problem on an international platform. The ways participants and activists perceive their positions within a social movement as it relates to these new communications methods do not appear to be discussed in enough detail within many forms contemporary research. ICTs created a paradigm shift in which public space can take on a virtual form, which will almost always be available for instant access at any hour, from PCs or mobile devices.

<sup>96</sup> "Egyptians bring down dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak, 2011," *Swarthmore College* online, last modified January 7, 2017, <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/egyptians-bring-down-dictatorship-hosni-mubarak-2011>.

### **Commonalities with 18 Tir**

In terms of commonalities, both *18 Tir* and the *Green Movement* were pro-democracy based on human rights principles and espoused values of nonviolence. They share historical roots of unrest dating back to 1905, and solidarity was very strong in both cases. Even without ICTs, *18 Tir* was able to gather a relatively large number of followers and participants given the time and conditions. Both social movements were dealing with brutal suppression where everyone's lives were at risk including their families. The differences and commonalities between these two social movements highlight the major shifts that took place within the decade that passed between them. It appears that there is a form of continuity akin to an engine whereby people's frustration keeps mounting; up until *18 Tir* there were several social movements, and then came the *Green Movement*. At least in Iran, *18 Tir* and the *Green Movement* appear to share a similar set of principles but the combination of worsening conditions and increased access to ICTs allowed for a much more widespread network of activists to form compared to years prior. The two social movements may bear different names but their end goal is the same; to achieve democratization from power and establish a secular democracy based on human rights principles.

### **Summation**

The ways participants in the *Green Movement* and *18 Tir* managed to circumvent extreme and dangerous conditions to exercise contention is important toward understanding what the future will hold. With there being more ways to get connected the lines between rural and urban will start to blur and create new unprecedented possibilities that could transform future social movements.

In terms of sustainability of a social movement, there is a lively debate over whether or not these social movements are just a temporal phase among youth stemming from respective subcultures. David Buckingham, editor of *Youth, Identity and Digital Media* would argue, “Subcultures are seen here not just as a subordinate, but also as subversive: they arise from contradictions and tensions in the dominant social order and represent a threat to established social norms.”<sup>97</sup> The pain of past generations here manifests itself in a very pronounced manner making it more than a just a subculture or phase. In particular, when the Internet was shut down in Iran,<sup>98</sup> people because of their unrelenting desires made the most out of alternative method of communication during that type of compromising situation. This information hints there being very detailed and complex levels of depth within the *Green Movement* that allow for their ability to exercise their demands, regardless of the conditions. Whether it is the entire web or segments that get banned or censored, how people react is indicative of a strong sense of solidarity. Internet penetration rates are examined in the next chapter because ICTs are not limited to usage from fixed locations but can be accessed via mobile means. This flexibility allows people to unite and form social movements with necessary dexterity to topple regimes and create promising social change. These massive uprisings that took place during the *Green Movement* help illustrate the transformation of how people identify themselves through both virtual and physical spaces to interact in the modern era.

<sup>97</sup> David Buckingham, *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*, ed. David Buckingham (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 4.

<sup>98</sup> Bray Hiawatha, "Finding a Way Around Iranian Censorship Activists Utilize Twitter, Web Tricks to Sidestep Blocks" last modified June 19, 2009. [http://www.boston.com/business/technology/articles/2009/06/19/activists\\_utilizing\\_twitter\\_web\\_proxies\\_to\\_sidestep\\_iranian\\_censorship/](http://www.boston.com/business/technology/articles/2009/06/19/activists_utilizing_twitter_web_proxies_to_sidestep_iranian_censorship/)

## CHAPTER 4: ROLES OF ICTs

### Preface

After the inception of ICTs society's perception of and interaction with space transformed over a few decades. What began as a tool used almost exclusively by engineers, academics, and governments soon became accessible to the general public reshaping its relation with the state. Often ICTs are analyzed on a relatively superficial level assuming it as a normal part of life rather than being differentiated from TCMs, as done so in my research, and reviewed in terms of the larger scale socio-political impact. This method is often depicted in academic circles and the mainstream media as either not relevant enough or sometimes viewed as more integral than they ought to be. The role of ICTs not only can affect social movements but how society functions, when society changes, so will the nature of demonstrations that follow. The objective in this research is to understand the interactions brought on by ICTs and the gradual ramifications as opposed to a strict cause and effect.

With this new medium came opportunities for people to share data and at a faster pace changing how they lead their lives, just as Morse code did so in the past with radio communication. Another factor considered is the issue of monitoring and censorship, often not discussed enough in academic and mainstream discourses. The *Green Movement's* landmark quality goes beyond how it attracted global attention but the ways it used ICTs in the process of bringing together millions of Iranians within a short span of time. The exact role of ICTs in the movement remains contested to this day. This study explored different aspects by which ICTs can influence people's daily interactions to measure the extent of their impact on the *Green Movement* and other social movements.

With the freedoms ICTs bring also come risks, as it is a potential gateway to new forms of expression and for government manipulation. Much like the “Telescreen” of George Orwell’s 1984<sup>99</sup>, people are keeping track of governments through their ICTs and being tracked by their governments. During the *Green Movement* ICTs were a relatively new frontier and starting to become popular. Now, almost a decade later, several *Political Expressionist* social movements of similar magnitudes followed. However, this trend may be in danger of becoming a figment of the past should net neutrality be restricted and censorship go rampant. There is always a risk that the freedoms ICTs once brought could disappear. Many governments seek ways to justify manipulation of net neutrality to increase their control over the World Wide Web to prevent “threats to national security” or more recently “fake news”. Such blanket accusations could undermine the reason why ICTs became widely adopted which in large part is for spontaneity, widespread reach, ease of use, and anonymity. By restricting the flow of information the geography of the World Wide Web may take a turn for the worse where people will become deprived of what they need to know and be flooded with distractions or irrelevant web content.

Examples of government interference with usage of the World Wide Web in Iran include the arrest of Jafar Panahi (a well known film director) and a friend of mine Satter Beheshti (an weblog activist and worker) whom were both tracked down via their activities online. Jafar Panahi was placed on house arrest<sup>100</sup> and Sattar was tortured to death.<sup>101</sup> Such incidents however

<sup>99</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 4.

<sup>100</sup> Xan Brooks, "Jafar Panahi: Arrested, Banned and Defying Iran with his New Film" last modified March 22, 2012. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/mar/22/jafar-panahi-arrested-banned-iran>

<sup>101</sup> Hugh Tomlinson, "Tortured to Death: Sattar Beheshti, a Blogger Critical of the Iranian Regime" last modified November 9, 2012. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tortured-to-death-sattar-beheshti-a-blogger-critical-of-the-iranian-regime-3cwmzhj9hk3>

disturbing also made the public more aware and take additional precautions. Despite pushes for authoritarian control there are individuals and groups world wide who do their part to make sure that ICTs remain a balanced tool for all its users. Oppressive governments can only do so much to surveil their citizens before the citizens find new ways to circumvent and surveil their respective governments. In Iran, an example of citizen surveillance of their governments were the final moments of a student, Neda Agha-Soltane, protesting in silence captured on film as she was shot in cold blood by the regime's militia. Much like the Lacanian gaze there is a sensation of watching and being watched, and a different sense of self in the experience of going online.

This chapter encompasses the following areas, a historical overview, transformations of Space through Internet Penetration Rates and commercial Applications, blogosphere and Web Security, and suppression of the Internet in Iran.

### **Historical Overview**

The World Wide Web is still fairly new yet the changes to society taking place are of an increasingly complex nature with each new type of ICTs which become popularized by the general public. These different communication methods ought to be explored in more depth within academic circles because each technological advancement ushers in new layers of interaction. This area of study is in constant flux where many parts of the World Wide Web cease to exist almost as soon as they were created. A major drawback for collecting data results where unlike times past where most material was concrete the World Wide Web is often unpredictable where data can be lost easily due to various reasons for its removal whether lapse

of time or censorship among other possibilities. This study focused on how these technical innovations impacted society and social movements.

The general framework for what became the modern World Wide Web was developed by the United States Department of Defense (DoD) known as Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) in 1969.<sup>102</sup> Through research at CERN in Sweden a computer scientist of British origin Tim Berners-Lee was able to link hypertext documents (early web pages) that could be accessed from any point in the network in 1980.<sup>103</sup> The term Internet came to exist in 1981.<sup>104</sup> E-mail was around for at least 7 years and was created in 1973 by Ray Tomlinson a computer scientist in Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>105</sup> The initial purpose of the early Internet was for government organizations, universities, and researchers.<sup>106</sup> A major leap then took place from when the World Wide Web was created where people began to use it a lot more primarily for blogging purposes and then *Political Expressionist* social movements began to use it in new innovative ways.

This same technology ended up being used to serve an unprecedented purpose of bringing activists together across broad distances. There was a transition away from centralized professional uses to more decentralized personal and urban uses. ICTs are challenging the way people view and understand society possibly creating a new category where community meets society, a reality both centralized and decentralized, redefining person-to-person interaction. During agrarian times people focused on what would benefit the collective, there was more in

<sup>102</sup> "Internet Timeline," *Infoplease* online, last modified January 11, 2017, <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0193167.html>

<sup>103</sup> "Internet Timeline"

<sup>104</sup> "Internet Timeline"

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.



person communication on a regular daily and spontaneous basis. After industrialization a much more individualized approach to life began to take hold of most areas in the world. The World Wide Web and ICTs further altered that trajectory creating a space where there was both in some ways more isolation and more connectivity.

What began as an exclusive technology within the borders of a single nation rose exponentially to a global level where in 2016 around 3.5 billion people are able to access to the World Wide Web almost 50% of the global population compared to 1995 where it was less than 1%<sup>107</sup> After a few decades the level of accessibility to the World Wide Web increased to a level that covers at least half of the globe. Major ramifications come in terms of potential impacts on people's daily lives. With such high rates of usage come risks, the term net neutrality first coined in 2003 year of the social media boom by professor of Law at Columbia Tim Wu to address the issue where the World Wide Web's integrity could be compromised by outside interests.<sup>108</sup> This is a major issue in particular with the current problem of massive global data influxes with corporations and government eager to manipulate and profit from to their own end. The World Wide Web used to be accessed almost exclusively through personal desktop computers, at educational or governmental institutions prior to the rise of ICTs. These communication methods offered new ways where people could gain access to the World Wide Web via different types of devices becoming of an increasingly portable nature. This trend is evolving at a pace that defies the conventional understanding of how people interact or even how automated devices are connected to each other. The Internet of Things (IoT) is a term that came to be in recent years

<sup>107</sup> "Internet users in the world" *Internet Live Stats* online, last modified January 11, 2017, <http://www.Internetlivestats.com/Internet-users/>

<sup>108</sup> Tim Wu, "Network Neutrality, Broadband Discrimination." *J. on Telecomm. & High Tech. L.* 2 (2003): 141.

referring to devices operating without human to computer interaction or human-to-human interaction.<sup>109</sup> These types of devices are expected to increase to around 50 billion by 2020, besides devices that are dependent on human interaction.<sup>110</sup> This suggests that even without human interaction ICTs will continue to shape the layout of the World Wide Web. Effectively, statistics of Internet usage may need to be reexamined as a whole to best measure the exact numbers of human, non-human users, and types of ICT platforms used to access the World Wide Web.

When taking a closer look at global Internet users in 2009 the total was rose to around 25% before it doubled to around 50% by 2016.<sup>111</sup> This means access to the Internet is being made available at an increasingly rapid pace. Even where Internet accessibility is limited, cellphones are capable of bridging the gap in connectivity between urban and suburban areas. As stated previously decentralization and centralization appears to be the current trend where the concept of community and society become two of the same due to the rise in ICT usage. web pages that increased in popularity were places for their users to exercise self-expression, share thoughts, passions, etc. A big part of the reason for why blogging services gained such widespread popularity is their emphasis on individuality and community before the introduction of more societal interests as exemplified in *Political Expressionist* social movements.

<sup>109</sup> "Internet of Things (IoT)," *IoT Agenda* online, last modified January 13, 2017  
<http://Internetofthingsagenda.techtarget.com/definition/Internet-of-Things-IoT>

<sup>110</sup> Dave Evans, "Internet of Things How the Next Evolution of the Internet is Changing Everything" last modified April 2011,  
[http://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en\\_us/about/ac79/docs/innov/IoT\\_IBSG\\_0411FINALpdf](http://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en_us/about/ac79/docs/innov/IoT_IBSG_0411FINALpdf)

<sup>111</sup> "Internet users in the world," *Internet Live Stats* online, last modified January 11, 2017,  
<http://www.Internetlivestats.com/Internet-users/>

Michel Foucault's Heterotopia helps describe this transition of ICTs and the World Wide Web away from outskirts of society into the center of most people's lives and how it changed the relationship between state and society. This trend is opposite to the example of graveyards provided by Foucault where they moved away from the center of society to its outskirts. People became less comfortable with the idea of death and the place that connects people's physical existence to that psychological abstraction. On the contrary with ICTs people began using them more for several reasons but also act as a similar gateway between the world people live in and a space existing outside of the physical plane. The key difference, unlike graveyards people can be connected to the World Wide Web from any part of the world and transmit data within short periods of time. Whether for sharing real or fictional experiences this new plane of communication and existence establishes a place for those realities to reach the world. ICTs were of interest for this study because they can serve both a communal and societal purpose. This unique set of conditions in part ushered in the era of *Political Expressionism* turning the world of politics and social interaction on its head.

To varying degrees an effect was felt globally with the rise of social movements in relation to ICT usage. New types of ICTs continue to make it easier for people to connect and mobilize despite the potential risks of external interference. One such technology to be deployed can expand access to the World Wide Web even further is provided by Google known as Loon or "Internet in a Suitcase". They expect to place balloons in the air in more rural areas in the world with access to wireless Internet connections as a means or people to stay connected<sup>112</sup> Although still in its initial stages this could open the door to an even more abstract social and political

<sup>112</sup> "Project Loon - X.," *X.company* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <https://x.company/loon/>

landscape where rural may become synonymous with urban going beyond the current trend of increased connectivity brought on by mobile devices.

### **Transformations of Space**

The issue of access is relevant to help determine the extent to which people's lifestyles are affected by ICTs. Available data on Internet Penetration Rates serves as a rough estimate since data differs greatly from nation to nation. There are also risks for inaccuracies and manipulation. To date there is lots of contradictory information about how people are able to access the World Wide Web where the Internet penetration rates were portrayed markedly lower in comparison with subscriptions to mobile phone services which through data subscriptions can access the World Wide Web. In Iran, such discrepancies are evident where Internet penetration as of 2014 according to one source *Internet Live Stats* is stated to be at 28.29% inclusive of mobile users<sup>113</sup> rising to 48.9% by 2016 and no information available for 2009<sup>114</sup> Another source from the ITU (International Telecommunications Union) estimates in 2014 the Internet penetration rate is at 39% with mobile users not specified, then the percentage rose to 45% in 2016 both much higher than the 2009 Internet penetration rate ranked at 14%.<sup>115</sup> For purposes of this research web statistics were taken from the ITU since it dates back to before 2014 and is a

<sup>113</sup> "Internet Users by Country (2014)," *Internet Live Stats* online, last modified January 1, 2014, <http://www.Internetlivestats.com/Internet-users-by-country/>.

<sup>114</sup> "Internet Users by Country (2016)," *Internet Live Stats* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://www.Internetlivestats.com/Internet-users-by-country/>.

<sup>115</sup> "Individuals using the Internet (% of population)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-TN-SY-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

reliable international source.<sup>116</sup> Later in the literature review some of these statistics are contrasted with data collected by Iran's Information Technology Organization (ITC) or Matma in Chapter 5 to illustrate how a lot more work needs to be done in terms of gathering and cross checking statistics on Internet penetration rates not only in Iran but the world.<sup>117</sup> Such a high difference in percentage points across sources is problematic, however, even with discrepancies the cited sources illustrate an upward rise in usage of ICTs since 2009 in Iran. Even without an exact number a trend in Internet penetration rates is still present. As for mobile subscription rates in 2010 mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people ranked at 71<sup>118</sup>, as of 2015 around 93 per 100 individuals of Iran's population had mobile subscriptions.<sup>119</sup> This suggests two points, one that the use of mobile devices was very high at the time of the *Green Movement's* peak and such device usage is continuing to rise at a very fast pace. It remains unclear as to how many of the mobile users are subscribing to data plans however it seems that in late 2016 it is estimated at third according to Iran's Ministry of Information & Communication Technology.<sup>120</sup> Even assuming the one-third data subscription rate of 2016 holds true, these devices can connect to wireless Internet and other sources again calling into question the accuracy of such a statistic.

<sup>116</sup> "Middle East Internet Usage Statistics, Population, Facebook and Telecommunications Reports," *Internet World Stats* online, last modified January 1, 2014, <http://Internetworldstats.com/stats5.htm>.

<sup>117</sup> Bahram Pourghadiri, "The Bewildering Maze of Internet Usage Statistics in Iran" last modified August 24, 2014. <http://www.netbina.com/blog/2014/8/8/Internet-usage-in-iran>

<sup>118</sup> "Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," *The World Bank* online, last modified 2018, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?>

<sup>119</sup> "Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2/>.

<sup>120</sup> "One-Third of Iran's Mobile Users on Data Plans," *TeleGeography* online, last modified February 23, 2017, <https://www.telegeography.com/products/commsupdate/articles/2017/02/23/one-third-of-irans-mobile-users-on-data-plans/>

Furthermore as of 2016, Farsi is the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing web content language.<sup>121</sup> This would indicate a high rate of production and consumption of online content available in the Persian language in proportion to its users.

The number of mobile subscriptions ought to be analyzed more in depth as Internet penetration statistics do not explain enough about the nature of web access alone. In addition to the web being accessed via mobile devices there are other technologies for data transfer which have not yet been studied in depth such as Bluetooth or use SMS (Short Messaging Service) messaging also known as text messaging. It is important to differentiate between methods of data transfer in addition to ICTs in studying how activists use mobile devices to mobilize and communicate.

Statistics available on Internet penetration rates even with their inaccuracies helped frame this research leading it to look at availability of mobile devices as a potential ICT communication method. Chances are if there are mobile subscriptions, there will be the possibility of access to the Internet, if not then alternatives are available such as SMS and Bluetooth available to activists which are just as instantaneous and could in some cases be faster. Bluetooth could be used as a means to bypass shutdowns and throttled Internet services.

Internet shutdowns may cease to be used as a repressive action when considering the level of people's dependence on ICTs.<sup>122</sup> In Egypt there was a shutdown for the duration of

<sup>121</sup> "Web technology fact of the day," *W3Techs* online, last modified January 1, 2017, [https://w3techs.com/blog/entry/fact\\_20160314](https://w3techs.com/blog/entry/fact_20160314)

<sup>122</sup> Anita Gohdes, "Internet Shutdowns During Political Unrest Are Becoming Normal"

multiple days took place including the disabling of text messages,<sup>123</sup> which cost the government 90 million USD.<sup>124</sup> If in Egypt millions were lost over almost a week in 2011, the losses now would likely be much greater and similarly in other nations, not accounting for inflation. What is alarming about that statistic is also reassuring, because countries are becoming more connected their governments are dependent as well therefore from an economic and political standpoint it is not practical to conduct a shutdown. Another reason why governments would likely be dissuaded from shutdowns in the future is it restricts their ability to track civilians who in turn can end up organizing surprise demonstrations or operate in an unpredictable manner. Overall web services became more integrated in people's daily lives, significantly impacting their day to day experiences among them local and international economies. Prominent examples in the business world affecting people's daily lives include the virtual elimination of video rental stores in favor of an online video streaming provider Netflix along with the economy of Taxis being affected by the rise in usage of ride sharing applications like Uber and Lyft. To date Uber is in 450 cities and 2 billion rides were completed between 2009 and July 2016.<sup>125</sup> As of December 2014 there were at least 1 million rides being conducted per day.<sup>126</sup> Uber in particular has received attention for its controversial rise to fame facilitated by its ease of use for consumers.

<sup>123</sup> Alexia Tsotsis, "Egypt Situation Gets Worse, People Reporting Internet and SMS Shutdown" last modified January 27, 2016. <https://techcrunch.com/2011/01/27/egypt-situation-gets-worse-people-reporting-Internet-and-SMS-shutdown/>

<sup>124</sup> Matthew J. Schwartz, "Egypt Takes \$90 Million Hit From Internet Blackout" last modified February 2, 2011. <https://www.networkcomputing.com/government/egypt-takes-90-million-hit-Internet-blackout/1271943411>

<sup>125</sup> Andrew J. Hawkins, "Uber Just Completed its Two-Billionth Trip" last modified July 18, 2016. <http://www.theverge.com/2016/7/18/12211710/uber-two-billion-trip-announced-kalanick-china-didi>

<sup>126</sup> Ellen Huet, "Uber Says it's Doing 1 Million Rides Per Day, 140 Million In Last Year" last modified December 17, 2014. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ellenhuet/2014/12/17/uber-says-its-doing-1-million-rides-per-day-140-million-in-last-year/>

People do not need to pay the drivers cash, and the drivers are able to earn a living without the need to go be involved with the process to run a taxi. Even the position of a driver itself may one day be removed should the vehicles become fully controlled by artificial intelligence further increasing the automation of people's daily activities through ICTs although at this time remains a work in progress.<sup>127</sup>

The offline commerce industry is undergoing many significant changes as well with eCommerce markets on the rise including Alibaba, Amazon, and Ebay among others. As of 2016 there were 2.22 trillion sales made online in USD.<sup>128</sup> Amazon's recent decision to buy Whole Foods for 13.7 billion has unprecedented ramifications which may redefine the shopping experience and forever change the grocery industry.<sup>129</sup> The key takeaway is the relation between political and economic developments with the rise of ICTs in an almost parallel manner. The social and commercial applications became more intertwined at an increasing rate over the past few decades. In specific the blogosphere could be credited for fueling the transition into increased dependence on the Internet redefined the World Wide Web ushering in new freedoms and unique challenges.

<sup>127</sup> Joana Bhuiyan, "Uber's Autonomous Cars Drove 20,354 Miles and Had to be Taken Over at Every Mile, According to Documents" last modified March 16, 2017. <https://www.recode.net/2017/3/16/14938116/uber-travis-kalanick-self-driving-internal-metrics-slow-progress>

<sup>128</sup> John Stevens, "Internet Stats & Facts for 2016 List of Internet, E-commerce & Hosting statistics for 2016" last modified August 11, 2016. <https://hostingfacts.com/Internet-facts-stats-2016/>

<sup>129</sup> Sarah Butler and Zoey Wood, "Amazon to Buy Whole Foods Market in \$13.7bn Deal" last modified June 16, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jun/16/amazon-buy-whole-foods-market-organic-food-fresh>



## Blogosphere & Web Security

Often different websites and applications are credited for playing significant roles in shaping recent *Political Expressionist* social movements, however it would seem more than crediting a particular platform attention should be placed on the purpose served by that tool. It is important to remember many web pages are not permanent and often of a temporal nature. An example to illustrate this took place when one of the most well-known and oldest free web hosting pages known as GeoCities was shut down. It did not fare well for long in 1999 after Pyra Lab's Blogspot became popular to be subsequently bought by Google in 2003 then renamed to Blogger.<sup>130</sup> This marked the increased personal usage of the World Wide Web departing from the earlier when it was limited to professional and educational uses. Part of the reason for such wide appeal of these types of web pages is because they require almost no expertise in web programming where people can express with more ease and be read by wide audiences.

A major turning point in the history of the World Wide Web was turned on its head in 2009 when Yahoo's GeoCities web hosting service experienced an abrupt shutdown rendering 38 million web pages inaccessible.<sup>131</sup> Before the closure of GeoCities, it was acquired by Yahoo! in 1998 for almost 4.6 billion USD.<sup>132</sup> When dial-up Internet was more prevalent, network connections were slower, GeoCities was the service of choice. It was among the top 3 most viewed websites in the world at its peak of popularity during 1998.<sup>133</sup> GeoCities failed to keep up

<sup>130</sup> Jeffrey Powers, "August 23, 1999: Pyra Labs Launched Blogspot" last modified August 23, 2016. <https://dayintechhistory.com/dith/august-23-1999-pyra-labs-launched-blogspot/>

<sup>131</sup> Michael Shechmeister, "Ghost Pages: A Wired.com Farewell to Geocities" last modified November 3, 2009. <https://www.wired.com/2009/11/geocities>

<sup>132</sup> Allan Pollett, "The End of an Era – The Death of GeoCities :(" last modified October 26, 2009. <http://allanpollett.com/geocities-end-of-an-era>

<sup>133</sup> Pollett, "The End of an Era – The Death of GeoCities :("

with its competitors to meet society's demands and usage habits. In part staff cuts in the merger with Yahoo contributed to the demise of this once leading platform.

These decisions were not without ramifications, and raise the question as to how people will be affected now as they are dependent on web platforms now more than ever. Whether a business decision or regime censorship a massive shutdown could lead to irreparable loss of information. This incident illustrates how the World Wide Web and its platforms can undergo major shifts with little to no input from respective user bases. Facebook or similar services which have numbers of users far greater than the time of GeoCities could experience unfathomable consequences should they be interrupted or be terminated. Platforms may change but goals and messages do not, just the speed and amount of data which users are able to exchange will likely increase.

As much freedom the Internet may provide there are shortcomings which include manipulation and censorship of data. There also is a possibility the autonomous nature of the World Wide Web is threatened as new paradigm may return to the hands of government agencies and corporations which birthed these technologies and become more restricted like in the past. A new problem is surfacing outside of censorship which is overabundance of material being published to the World Wide Web. This leads to a chaotic amount of information with few ways to filter through it. These posts are being commodified by corporations and turned into a war against spam and "fake news" by politicians. A small number of people create the algorithms used by major web services to decide what content users are able to see. Many search engines and social media use such a technology. If such code is modified to suit biased intentions it can lead to disastrous results harming net neutrality.

Net neutrality may be at risk when algorithms are used to filter out the majority search results guess which ones are the most relevant to a user's interest. Algorithms are more widespread due to the increases in the online population. With such abundance in the number of posts and content being generated, algorithms became adopted as a standard for delivering content among different Internet platforms like Facebook and Twitter. A small number of people who develop these algorithms have access to the code which plays a role in deciding what users are able to see when they use certain web platforms. Algorithms by nature may be beneficial for users or advertiser because it brings people with common interests together, but there is also a possibility the tool be used maliciously to filter out important information and offer users irrelevant or material which is not as useful.

The issue of massive amounts of content being posted is evident when, "By the end of 2014 a typical photo post on Facebook was seen by just 4 out of every 100 followers, a text only post seen by just under 6 out of every 100 followers, and video posts by around 9 out of every 100 followers." The proportion of content to visibility is reaching a point where it is likely necessary to have algorithms filter though high influxes of data or it will be very difficult for users to navigate the chaos of data.<sup>134</sup> Algorithms can serve multiple purposes, bring the most relevant information possible to users, serve as a source of advertising revenue for Internet platforms, or possibly a means for censorship. Other types of possible violations on net neutrality may result similar to when in 2015, "Facebook was recently in the news when its free Internet service was temporarily shuttered in India and then Egypt for violating the countries' net

<sup>134</sup> Kalev Leetaru, "The Algorithms Are Taking Over: Who Controls Our Online Future?" last modified January 2, 2016. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kalevleetaru/2016/01/02/the-algorithms-are-taking-over-who-controls-our-online-future/>

neutrality laws by offering free access only to a small number of websites determined by Facebook itself”<sup>135</sup> If a company with a user base as large as Facebook is capable of such actions, then rough regimes could do even worse actions. Twitter also recently began use algorithms as of 2016.<sup>136</sup> This form of manipulation made to the ways information can be transmitted was Twitter’s new policy to display tweets in a non-chronological order.<sup>137</sup> This allows for some posts to be elevated over others rather than be displayed chronologically. It would be difficult to determine if a Twitter’s users posts were censored by a specific entity because the blame can go to the algorithms used to display the messages. This calls into question if outcomes of the *Green Movement* protests would be different if Twitter was using algorithms back in 2009. The intention of algorithms may seem benevolent and useful but could go in a direction which infringes upon user’s rights to unrestricted and unbiased access to the information they seek. It may be easier in some ways to organize another social movement on scales similar to or greater than the *Green Movement* with the implementation of this type of technology. It may also be more difficult with such high influxes of data over short periods of time and how they are processed by web algorithms and in turn what sorts of censorship strategies are being applied. The difference now is the World Wide Web’s user base is astronomically higher meaning more information is being transmitted within the World Wide Web than ever before

<sup>135</sup> Leetaru, "The Algorithms Are Taking Over: Who Controls Our Online Future?"

<sup>136</sup> Andrew Griffin, "Twitter Timelines to Stop Being in Chronological Order, Sorted Instead by Relevance and Importance" last modified February 6, 2016. <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/twitter-timelines-to-stop-being-in-chronological-order-sorted-instead-by-relevance-and-importance-a6857886.html>

<sup>137</sup> J.D. Biersdorfer, "Putting Your Twitter Feed Back in Chronological Order" last modified March 21, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/22/technology/personaltech/putting-your-twitter-feed-back-in-chronological-order.html>

which is at risk for being tracked, censored, or otherwise manipulated by corporations or government entities.

Among the most popular services worldwide include are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. The following statistics are from 2017: Facebook is among the top contenders with a daily user base of 1.32 billion with 2.01 billion monthly active users,<sup>138</sup> Twitter has an estimated user base of 328 million,<sup>139</sup> Instagram's active monthly users total at 700 million,<sup>140</sup> and YouTube is said to have 5 billion views per day.<sup>141</sup> When compared to 2009, Facebook users were around 150 million,<sup>142</sup> Twitter's earliest available statistic on daily users is around 50 million<sup>143</sup> in 2011, Instagram was yet to exist, and YouTube video views per day was around 1 billion.<sup>144</sup> These statistics provide information about a trend where the user bases of social media web pages skyrocketed between when the *Green Movement* came into fruition and 2017. This helps frame the drastic change in proportion of web page membership and usage in less than a

<sup>138</sup> "Facebook Newsroom" *Facebook Newsroom* online, last modified July 11, 2017, <http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts>

<sup>139</sup> "It's what's happening," *Twitter* online, last modified July 1, 2017, <https://about.twitter.com/company>

<sup>140</sup> Salman Aslam, "Instagram by the Numbers: Stats, Demographics & Fun Facts" last modified April 29, 2017. <https://www.omnicoreagency.com/instagram-statistics/>

<sup>141</sup> "36 Mind Blowing YouTube Facts, Figures and Statistics – 2017," *Fortunelords* online, last modified March 23, 2017, <https://fortunelords.com/youtube-statistics/>

<sup>142</sup> Mark Zuckerberg, "A Great Start to 2009" last modified January 7, 2009. <https://web.archive.org/web/20090205064550/http://blog.facebook.com/blog.php?post=46881667130>

<sup>143</sup> Matthew Panzarino, "Twitter: 100M Active Users Per Month, 50% Log on Every Day, 55% on Mobile, 1B Tweets Every 5 Days" last modified September 8, 2011. <https://thenextweb.com/twitter/2011/09/08/twitter-100m-users-per-month-50-log-on-every-day-55-on-mobile/>

<sup>144</sup> Stan Schroeder, "YouTube Reaches One Billion Views Per Day" last modified October 9, 2009. <http://mashable.com/2009/10/09/youtube-billion-views/>

decade. These statistics display a correlation between the time when these services were relatively new, when they became more established, and contemporarily still gaining popularity.

In terms of net neutrality many countries violate the rights of their respective citizens with regard to this. Examples include: the blocking or throttling (slowing down of data), redirecting of web pages, or abuse of the underlying algorithms that privilege searches and direct net content. In the United States there is a pronounced ambiguity regarding the exact status of net neutrality> Since 2015, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established rules to better defend Net Neutrality by reclassifying broadband Internet access as a telecommunications service. In mid-2017 a new chairman Ajit Pai was appointed as the FCC chairperson, who sought to remove that classification which would enable broadband companies to throttle and manipulate web traffic as they see fit.<sup>145</sup> As of writing he managed to accomplish that very goal and the FCC repealed its net neutrality rules in February 22, 2018<sup>146</sup>. Issues arose in the past with more attention being paid to communications providers in the United States who acted in ways that infringed upon net neutrality, for example, most recently Verizon with regards to their video throttling.<sup>147</sup> Around 4 million people in the United States showed support for the reclassification

<sup>145</sup> Jon Brodtkin, "To Kill Net Neutrality Rules, FCC says Broadband isn't "Telecommunications" last modified June 1, 2017. <https://arstechnica.com/information-technology/2017/06/to-kill-net-neutrality-rules-fcc-says-broadband-isnt-telecommunications/>

<sup>146</sup> Fung, Brian. "The FCC's vote repealing its net neutrality rule is finally official. Here's what happens now." Last modified February 22, 2018 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/02/22/the-fccs-net-neutrality-rules-will-die-on-april-23-heres-what-happens-now/>

<sup>147</sup> Russell Brandom, "Verizon admits to throttling video in apparent violation of net neutrality" last modified July 21, 2017. <https://www.theverge.com/2017/7/21/16010766/verizon-netflix-throttling-statement-net-neutrality-title-ii>

of telecommunications services as a favor to net neutrality in 2016.<sup>148</sup> Whatever slowdowns or throttling that may take place it is not like the sort that occurs under oppressive regimes, however, it sets a dangerous precedent, which can be used as a reason to justify increased government or corporate involvement with in the regulation of the World Wide Web. If net neutrality can be compromised in the United States then other nations may see it as a new international norm.

The protection of net neutrality is more at risk by different practices that enables the invasion of people's privacy under the pretext of safety. Mark Zuckerberg in the fallout of numerous controversies related to the recent elections in the United States expressed his interest in combating "fake news" websites.<sup>149</sup> In essence, a 1984-esque "Ministry of Truth" is possible wherein people who run certain web pages can monitor, censor, or filter certain posts or activities they deem unfit.<sup>150</sup> In the novel 1984 by George Orwell the Ministry of Truth was the site where output information that reaches the masses was constantly being monitored and edited to meet the government's varying perspectives. 'Fake News' establishes a dangerous precedent begging the question, "Who is authorized to consider the legitimacy or illegitimacy of 'Fake News'?" Net neutrality could be forever compromised if the tendency of internet user monitoring by the tech or government elite becomes more widespread. For example, users' data may be at

<sup>148</sup> David Lieberman, "Court Upholds FCC Internet Reclassification For Net Neutrality" last modified June 14, 2016. <http://deadline.com/2016/06/court-upholds-fcc-Internet-reclassification-net-neutrality-1201772294/>

<sup>149</sup> Robert Hackett, "Mark Zuckerberg: Facebook Will Tackle Fake News As It Did Click Bait." last modified April 12, 2017. <http://fortune.com/2017/04/12/facebook-mark-zuckerberg-fake-news/>

<sup>150</sup> Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 6.

risk, as there is already a problem of data mining where corporations and governments sell, buy, and profit from the information people share online.

Web traffic alone is a major source of income for corporations and individuals alike. Teens in Macedonia, for example, profited from the 2016 United States elections, making as much as \$200,000 from the web traffic they were receiving for posting fake news.<sup>151</sup> If that is possible by amateurs, then the types of profits to be made on people's personal information by corporations and governments is innumerable. Examples like this are used to defend the invasion of privacy by corporations and governments, and ultimately, people are on the losing end unless more is done to educate the masses about how the World Wide Web is changing and the ways it impacts society. Another problem with the increased monitoring of the World Wide Web is that it could prevent access and the use of the very resources which in part allowed for the *Green Movement* in 2009 and other social movements which that followed to gain large amounts public support within a short period of time. Pointedly stated, restrictions on the flow of information could inhibit the formation of future social movements. This potential redistribution of power back into the hands of governments or corporations instead of the people at large could affect the ways information will be transmitted in the future. This type of 'Big Brother' logic causes more problems than it intends to resolve.

Other factors affecting the future of Net Neutrality include the slowing down or speeding up of traffic to certain web pages, manipulation of search results, tracking of user activity for 'advertising' purposes or censorship. This type of logic is destroying the innovative nature of the

<sup>151</sup> "Revealed: The 16-Year-Old from Macedonia Who is just One of the Faces Behind the Spread of Fake News on Social Media," *Daily Mail* online, last modified November 25, 2016, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3972662/The-16-year-old-Macedonia-just-one-faces-spread-fake-news-social-media.html>



World Wide Web The future of ICTs in Social Movements remains unclear, however, because of their increased availability it became possible for activists World Wide Web to orchestrate full-fledged mobilizations by the millions. Instead of remaining as a tool kept in check by society, the World Wide Web may turn into a glorified entertainment service where people are less active and the type of usage that advocates for affirmative political change becomes more passive. In general, given the vast and expansive nature of ICTs it will be difficult for almost every component to be analyzed in detail. At the same time there seems to be a reluctance in academia to be more embracing of the relationship between these tools and their broader societal applications. ICTs redefined the way people interact with one another, the state, and society in ways that ought to be at the forefront of social and political science.

The efficacy of mechanisms to counteract invasions of public privacy is one of those areas where information tends to be vague. Discussions of the pros and cons of privacy tools remain vague in most discourse about the use of ICTs in social movements outside of the occasional mention of Proxies (used to hide ones IP address but traffic may be exposed), Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), more recently The Onion Router (TOR), among other platforms. These services may be advantageous for accessing blocked content but there are associated risks which need to be studied in more depth. Among one of the more well-known services TOR (an online anonymous browsing service) was found to have a major point of vulnerability where data can be mined and stolen. It consists of a volunteer-run network of nodes described as Tor nodes through which users can navigate to hide their IP addresses.<sup>152</sup> The problem with this system is

<sup>152</sup> Jeremy Kirk, "Security Researcher Intercepts Embassy Passwords from Tor" last modified September 10, 2007. <http://www.infoworld.com/article/2649832/security/security-researcher-intercepts-embassy-passwords-from-tor.html>.

that when unencrypted data is sent across the network, whoever manages the Tor node can access the information passing through; this was proven by Dan Egerstad, a security researcher from Sweden in 2007.<sup>153</sup> As the network is volunteer managed and run, anyone can set up a Tor node and in due course potentially extract information that passes through. Egerstad managed to obtain information such as passwords and usernames sent from international embassies, for example.<sup>154</sup> In effect, TOR can hide one's location and provide access to censored web content, but personal information is left vulnerable, calling into question the use of some privacy tools within ICTs.

This controversy appeared to be glossed over in two well-known works that analyze the role of ICTs in Society and potential applications, *Networks of Outrage and Hope*<sup>155</sup> by Manuel Castells, or not explained in enough detail in *The New Digital Age*<sup>156</sup> by Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, both published six years later in 2013 since the controversy around TOR usage arose. The work by Manuel Castells attempts to explain the role of Social Movements as related to social media.<sup>157</sup> The work by Schmidt and Cohen focuses more on ICTs and the implications these communication methods have for society.<sup>158</sup> Both works address many important issues, it is surprising though, that this discovery about the TOR service controversy or similar services were not reviewed in more detail within these works, academia, or even mainstream media.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Kirk, "Security Researcher Intercepts Embassy Passwords from Tor"

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Manuel Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 63.

<sup>156</sup> Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, *The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business*, (London, UK: Hachette UK, 2013), 45.

<sup>157</sup> Castells, *Networks of Outrage and Hope*, 63.

<sup>158</sup> Schmidt and Cohen, *The New Digital Age*, 45.

<sup>159</sup> Jeremy, Kirk. "Security Researcher Intercepts Embassy Passwords from Tor."

The TOR example may indicate potential in the creation of backdoors or ways for the government to make their own usage of this service to suit their own purposes. There also are similar misconceptions about the safety in the role of proxies, VPNs, and other privacy services. The central issue we lack a certainty about what happens to information after it is transmitted, or in some cases who even owns the servers where that data is routed, who can control what data enters, and then exits their systems. It may be less risky in some cases to operate from a local Internet connection rather than raising red flags by using another service whose ownership possibly cannot be verified or trusted; regardless of which service is in use, once information is transmitted there is a risk that it can be stolen or compromised.

At best these types of services allow for web pages to load that otherwise would be inaccessible from within an authoritarian regime. Even in Iran members of the government resort to using these types of privacy services to circumvent the national firewall<sup>160</sup>. This was clearly shown when a local Iranian station live-on-air showed on one of the screens of a government computer where its desktop was visible with an icon of a popular service to get around web traffic restrictions.<sup>161</sup> How activists fare with firewalls is important to consider, as to how they can successfully communicate through certain platforms will affect their abilities to organize and mobilize.

Another topic to consider is the Internet of Things. The IOTs are also of increasing importance, as they are becoming more and more prominent worldwide, the threat of cyber-attacks are becoming more and more sophisticated. At present, much more can happen than a

<sup>160</sup> Timothy B. Lee, "Here's how Iran censors the Internet" last modified August 15, 2013. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2013/08/15/heres-how-iran-censors-the-Internet/>

<sup>161</sup> Lee, "Here's how Iran censors the Internet"

simple data breach. As of October 22, 2016 there is an increase in the strength of Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks where targeted networks were forced to shut down due to a massive influx of unique web traffic from different IP addresses all at once.<sup>162</sup> The problem with IOTs is that there are countless vulnerabilities to being hacked for this purpose, tactics exist where numbers of IOTs as high as 380,000 can be used for this purpose at any time, and speeds of attacks are increasing to high levels at around 1TBS.<sup>163</sup> This kind of information is public knowledge and poses many dangers if it falls into the wrong hands.

The current climate of the blogosphere and web security in relation to the internet is shifting at an even faster rate than years prior. Data is moving around much more due to increases in population, therefore its removal, misplacement, or expiration are likely to happen in *Digital Content Temporality*. It is because of these conditions it is a priority for all useful firsthand material posted online about any political phenomena ought to be archived because there is no guarantee it will remain online from one day to the next. Even a few websites used for this research were already shut down or were taken offline for unspecified reasons, if it were not for Archive.org they would not be preserved.<sup>164</sup> These developments merit the attention for future research to better gauge the ramifications of the ever-changing geography of the worldwide web.

<sup>162</sup> Michael DeCesare, "How Massive DDoS Attacks are Undermining the Internet" last modified October 22, 2016. <https://techcrunch.com/2016/10/22/how-massive-ddos-attacks-are-undermining-the-Internet/>

<sup>163</sup> DeCesare "How massive DDoS attacks are undermining the Internet"

<sup>164</sup> "Internet Archive is a Non-Profit Library of Millions of Free Books, Movies, Software, Music, Websites, and More," *Archive.org* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <https://www.archive.org>.

## The Suppression of the Internet in Iran

In Iran there are multiple issues in terms of how Internet services are provided, monitored, how people are permitted to use them, and how they are actually put into use. Among the major issues existing in Iran at present are that certain web pages are throttled (slowed down) more than others. The Washington Post decided to test certain web pages for throttling or blocked access in 2013. The results for highest throttling includes art, society, news, and regional; whereas, almost no throttling was done to Health, Iran, Science, and Reference. Unknown web traffic that the government's firewall is unable to identify is slowed down for about 60 seconds and cuts off after that point also known as "white listing".<sup>165</sup> The nationwide speed limit is 128 kbps about as fast as a typical dial up modem at 56 kbps. Internet connections in most of the United States are at a rate that is around 100 times greater on average.<sup>166</sup> Academics within Iran must request special permission for increased speeds.

The *Green Movement* dealt with these types of speeds perhaps even slower and still managed to avail from this resource in some of the most creative and innovative ways in modern history. In response to the rise in social media activities and online the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken to a variety of measures to conduct surveillance on its citizens. Many of the regime's current technologies for suppressing the Internet were imported from China.<sup>167</sup> Other collaborations by the regime with foreign companies include Nokia-Siemens to establish more

<sup>165</sup> Simurgh Aryan, Homa Aryan, and J. Alex Halderman, "Internet Censorship in Iran: A First Look." *FOCI*. 2013.

<sup>166</sup> "Internet Speeds by Country (Mbps)," *Fastmetrics.com* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <https://www.fastmetrics.com/Internet-connection-speed-by-country.php>

<sup>167</sup> Mark C. Eades, "China's Newest Export: Internet Censorship" last modified January 30, 2014. <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2014/01/30/china-is-exporting-Internet-censorship-to-iran>

strict protocols of censorship in particular deep packet inspection in 2008.<sup>168</sup> This plays a big role in the detailed control the regime has over the speed websites are able to load or whether or not they can even load at all in the first place.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is likely conducting covert activities to monitor, suppress information, and punish civilians through the Iranian Cyber Army. Even in not knowing their exact relation to the government of Iran, what is certain is that they support Khamenei. It is evident according to the Strategic Studies Institute that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp's (IRGC) original purpose for this type of Cyber Army was to ward off internal threats.<sup>169</sup>

Protesters often must undergo great lengths to remain anonymous at the risk of being imprisoned, arrested, or killed. A friend of mine, Sattar Beheshti, a blogger was imprisoned, tortured, and killed by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2012 after being tracked from his blog posts online.<sup>170</sup> Another well-known case is that of Jafar Panahi, an Iranian filmmaker who was placed on house arrest for his activities through the web.<sup>171</sup> This shadow-like organization is claimed by the majlis to have 120,000 members over the course of 2009 and 2012.<sup>172</sup> This number is questionable given that the actual statistics are closer to 2,400.<sup>173</sup> Funding is said to

<sup>168</sup> John Herrman, "Nokia, Siemens Helped Iran Rig Networks for Government Control" last modified July 22, 2009. <http://gizmodo.com/5299826/nokia-siemens-helped-iran-rig-networks-for-government-control>

<sup>169</sup> Eric K. Shafa, "Iran's Emergence as a Cyber Power" last modified August 20, 2014. <http://web.archive.org/web/20160702055005/http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Irans-emergence-as-cyber-power/2014/08/20>

<sup>170</sup> "Sattar Beheshti Murderer Gets Three Years in Prison," *International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran* online, last modified August 9, 2014. <http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2014/08/sattar-beheshti-4/>.

<sup>171</sup> Brooks, "Jafar Panahi: Arrested, Banned and Defying Iran with His New Film"

<sup>172</sup> Shafa, "Iran's Emergence as a Cyber Power"

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

have risen from an estimated 76 million to 1 billion USD near late-2011.<sup>174</sup> This is one example of the many areas the IRGC handles on the behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran to exert its influence on Iranian society.

In terms of the capacities of the Iranian Cyber Army there are two major areas defensive and offensive. As part of their defensive strategies they use numerous websites to monitor the online activities of Iranians both inside and outside of Iran. The Iranian Cyber Army boasts of being the fourth largest cyber army in the world, this is debatable at best, as they operate on a more defensive capacity;<sup>175</sup> Alongside their monitoring schemes the internet is also a platform for the transmission of propaganda. Over the course of this research in YouTube there is a particular statement that stood out as overplayed on top of a classic Persian music video pre-1979 revolution with the following passage, “The Iranian cyber Army warns all betrayer puppets that we will not let them feel comfortable even in their master[‘]s proximity”.<sup>176</sup> This statement aside from an alarming tone is the type of rhetoric being espoused to scare Iranians into submission. The authenticity of this statement remains somewhat unclear but is probably tied to the Cyber Army because the account bearing a flag of the Islamic Republic, the description section mentioning “Islamic” and containing a link to Khamenei.org.<sup>177</sup> This account was opened on February 23rd 2009, months prior to the corrupt elections that spawned the *Green Movement*.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Amir Waqas, "Israeli Think Tank Acknowledges Iran as Major Cyber Power, Iran Claims its 4th Biggest Cyber Army in World" last modified October 18, 2013.

<https://www.hackread.com/iran-biggest-cyber-army-israel/>

<sup>176</sup> Artavahisht, "Iranian Cyber Army" last modified March 4, 2009.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VtDKVIt6wU>

<sup>177</sup> Artavahisht, "Artavahisht" last modified February 23, 2009.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/Artavahisht/about>

There are likely many more accounts serving similar purposes to promote a propaganda exaggerating the Iranian Cyber Army's capacity to control civilians as way to cause fear.

In the case of YouTube any account controlled by the Islamic Republic or its affiliates enables the group to get an idea of the type of content people are interested in viewing and from where to obtain general analytics. As to the exact direction and nature of the Iranian Cyber Army and what it is capable of remains ambiguous but appears to be more about blocking web pages and tracking data that passes through their servers. What is certain is their tactics for monitoring the activities of Iranians online in any way possible even requiring popular web pages in Farsi report to the government about the type of information that gets sent to these websites from their respective users.

In terms of how activists in Iran are taking advantage of ICTs, the 'Politics of Fun' helped narrow down the scope of what kinds of activities could be categorized as resistance. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram were among the first ICT platforms to be used as a way oppose and change the status quo. Because Iran is a theocracy, actions which in the Western world would not be viewed as retaliatory: dancing, music, women viewing men playing sports are some of the types of activities, are viewed as breaking a violation of the law in the Islamic Republic. Among these contentious actions included: youth in Iran were dancing along to the song "Happy" by Pharrell Williams, participating in the ALS Ice Water Challenge, and publishing numerous videos created with the Dubsmash app. The "Happy" song in particular is of interest because it led to seven people being arrested for producing a video of them dancing to



it, many of whom were subject to 91 lashes and six months in prison.<sup>178</sup> The sentences were then suspended for six of the participants.<sup>179</sup> About a week later the director was freed on bail.<sup>180</sup> This harsh reaction to young people dancing to a song exemplifies the degree to which what would appear as 'fun' in many nations is not considered as such in Iran. The Tehran police chief characterized the video as a "vulgar clip that hurt public chastity".<sup>181</sup> The global attention this incident attracted enabled Iranian hardliners and moderates alike to take on a stance that was less harsh because of how much attention the controversy had generated. It is likely that the public outcry around the incident played a role in preventing the actual sentences from being carried out. This is a strong example of what can happen when ICTs are used as a conduit to inform the world about what is happening in a country and with enough pressure, it can be conjectured, rogue governments must reassess or withhold their stance.

There are at least four new apps that are currently playing an influential role in Iran among its civilians after the *Green Movement's* peak activity drew to a close, among them are Instagram WhatsApp, LINE, Viber, Telegram, and Dubsmash. WhatsApp, and Telegram allow for Iranians to communicate with each other in an instantaneous manner whether within Iran or abroad; among all of them Telegram has more active users which is more than half of Iran's population. As calls through landlines are heavily monitored and international calls are

<sup>178</sup> Doug Stanglin, "Iranians Escape Lashing for Dancing in 'Happy' Video" last modified September 19, 2014. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/09/19/iran-happy-pharrell-williams-sentenced-suspended/15879809/>

<sup>179</sup> Saad Abedine, "'Happy' Video Dancers, but not Director, freed in Iran, Group says" last modified May 21, 2017. <http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/21/world/meast/iran-happy-video-arrests/index.html>

<sup>180</sup> Robert Mackey, "Director of 'Happy in Tehran' Video Is Reportedly Freed" last modified May 29, 2014. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/30/world/middleeast/director-of-happy-in-tehran-video-is-reportedly-freed.html>

<sup>181</sup> Stanglin "Iranians escape lashing for dancing in 'Happy' video"

expensive, these are becoming part of a new trend, communication with less risks of being surveilled. This is an indication of how the usage of ICTs are undergoing continuous shifts and that the usage of particular applications remains dynamic; because there are a variety of communication apps it is becoming ever more difficult for the regime to track civilians.

The app Dubsmash helps people in Iran to have a voice that otherwise would be silenced. The app allows for users to lip sync along to particular songs of their choice. Even at its simplest level the simple act of singing along has very few political implications, however, there are political implications because listening to music is frowned upon and people can be punished as exemplified by the “Happy” Incident. It is also a way to make Iranians feel more connected on a personal and cultural level amid the great disconnect in public life.

The role of newer methods of communication including Facebook Live could prove to further alter the ways activists can organize should another upheaval take place on the level of or of a greater magnitude than what took place in 2009. Despite there being a strong drive on the Islamic Republic of Iran’s behalf to develop its Cyber Army, they are far from being able to completely silence the people of Iran.

There are around 80 million Iranians as of 2016<sup>182</sup> this army even at the highest estimate is around .0015% of the total population. Even with the most sophisticated of technologies and a determined interventionist stance, it is not possible to monitor large sections of the population at once. Even The United Kingdom, famous for its depth of surveillance, in a recent leak was

<sup>182</sup> "Iran Population," *Worldometers* online, last modified July 28 2017, <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/iran-population/>.

reported to be only capable of monitoring around 6,500 civilian online activities at a time.<sup>183</sup> A nation who is advanced at monitoring civilians is capable of doing live monitoring of only a couple thousand means in other countries that are developing their IT infrastructure their potential to monitor will likely be much weaker. There is mounting unrest and a lot of unanswered questions since the *Green Movement*' massive protests as to how the Islamic Republic of Iran is exerting its control over the World Wide Web. It is only a matter of time before people will begin to take advantage of internet activism with usage on these newer ICT platforms increasing. This also shows that it is not what specific resource activists are providing, but the significance of the resources that are most useful depending on the circumstances. The types of tools, names, and what can be accomplished through their use change, but people will always find a way to get closer to achieving their goals.

### **Summation**

ICTs have contributed many unique changes to the way society structures itself and the way people lead their daily lives. There is an underlying mainstream assumption that ICTs are making our lives more convenient, but inconveniently they may also serve as distractions. It appears that out of all the positive and negative aspects these communication methods bring, it is important to remember that these technologies are tools. There is also the possibility that internet falsities can be considered real, fake news is not a new problem, it has been around for a long time before even ICTs existed, it just is easier now to fabricate information and spread it. At the

<sup>183</sup> Kieren McCarthy, "Leaked: The UK's Secret Blueprint with Telcos for Mass Spying on Internet, Phones – and Backdoors" last modified May 4, 2017. [https://www.theregister.co.uk/2017/05/04/uk\\_bulk\\_surveillance\\_powers\\_draft/](https://www.theregister.co.uk/2017/05/04/uk_bulk_surveillance_powers_draft/)

same time, it is easier to research any topic that comes to mind to validate the authenticity, therefore calling into question the recent rhetoric against fake news. The attempt to block ‘Fake News’ is a dangerous crusade where censorship of people’s voices online can be justified more easily. These same methods that can help mobilize social movements based on nonviolence can be used to perpetuate repressive tactics and even incite violence as facilitating the rise of the extremist group known as IS. One of their trademarks is exporting violent ideologies and publishing their barbarities with the hopes of garnering recruits. This is a very dangerous problem, much more than ‘Fake News’, where a lot of extremist material manages to infect different parts of the world.

The Internet is described in *The New Digital Age* by Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen as amplifying both the power of governments to censor and control, as well as to empower civilians with more accessible forms of agency.<sup>184</sup> It is important to consider this unique relationship because these great freedoms have manifested great responsibilities, such as the threat of totalitarianism or terrorism. The role of individuals and their subsequent actions can combine as a collective for better or worse—whether decentralized or not—where wider audiences can be reached over shorter periods of time. The ultimate direction of ICTs remains to be determined as Loon, the IOTs, and even Virtual Reality appear to be upcoming trends that may once again further shake the foundations and relations between the state, space and society. Yet, there always is a risk when ICTS are involved where Digital Content Temporality can be the difference between crucial information reaching the globe or being removed by a third-party as soon as it was posted. With such a massive population of people online and such high influxes of

<sup>184</sup> Schmidt et al., *The New Digital Age*, 75.

data, even correct information can get lost in a flood of uploads where even if the content is online, it becomes very difficult to gain enough of a following. *Political Expressionism* continues to grow and evolve at a pace faster than even the industries from which they originate can keep up. Corporations are making a significant effort to stay ahead of the curve while the field of political and social science is at risk of falling behind. It becomes clear that for there to be success in the future of social movements in any nation there must be balance between the usage of ICTs and TCMs.

## CHAPTER 5: REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS:

### A LITERATURE + MEDIA REVIEW

#### Preface

This segment of the study reviews two areas, which measure rhizomatic developments post-*Green Movement* and deciphers the possible reasons as to the different outcomes of more recent social movements, some of which became affected by violence and increased volatility. As stated earlier, the direction of a social movement can be influenced by many factors including: *Intergenerational Expression*, *Political Expressionism*, *Co-Optive Expressionism*, *Meydan Expressionism*, foreign or localized intervention, among others. Overall, literature and media are beginning to notice other regions outside of the well-established Western European paradigm. However, the scope of this research in the fields of social and political science needs to expand at a faster pace or will fall further behind. Most studies about social movements in the past dealt with governmental systems very different to modern ones and the majority of social movements in recent times have occurred under authoritarian governments. The modern movements are driven by factors some of which are similar to, but also different from the ones which arose in Western Europe often analyzed in classical political science theory.

This chapter overviews different academic and mainstream literature to gauge strengths and weaknesses in terms of how recent social movements driven by *Political Expressionism* in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia are analyzed. There are two areas which were analyzed: social movements of reduced volatility such as the *Green Movement* in Iran, *April 6 Movement* in Egypt, *Taksim Square Gezi Park Movement* in Turkey, and the *Umbrella Movement*, and those

of increased volatility which took place in Bahrain and Syria. When social movements are almost exclusively analyzed on their own terms there is the possibility of omitting the broader patterns of how they may be interrelated or are building off one another. This chapter aims to reduce setbacks in the future for researchers and journalists who try to collect reliable data about social movements. Specifically, the question of volatility is important given that often social movements are seen in terms of successes and failures, and thus different levels of volatility can shape the path between the start of a social movement and its end. All social movements involve some degree of volatility but those which are most volatile end up with both unsuccessful results and a rise in violence. *Rhizomatic* transmission of behaviors appear to have taken both positive and negative directions depending on the level of volatility.

The methodology behind this review expects to serve as a countermeasure to prevent potentially hasty or haphazard analyses from gaining traction. ICTs were found to be of increasing importance, but at the same time they drive *offline* factors behind social movements and thus the consideration of this behavior beyond the internet remains integral. For each country, prior to delving into the literature analysis, there is a brief discussion of Internet penetration rates and mobile subscriptions during their respective social movement peaks to provide some context as to the potential impact of ICTs.

## **Social Movements with Reduced Volatility**

### ***The Implications of the Green Movement for Political Expressionist Social Movements***

There are differing schools of thought as to the exact organization and scope of impact the *Green Movement* left behind. Numerous works were published on this topic, yet it seems

much remains to be explored in detail. This chapter will argue, that the question of ICTs has not yet been explored with enough depth. Numerous descriptions were attributed to the *Green Movement* ranging from spontaneous, semi-spontaneous, or even amorphous. ICTs and their exact role is limited to the types of information available for the public to research. With the passing of time due to *Digital Content Temporality* a lot of data on the *Green Movement* was lost, with each passing year it can become an increasingly more complex task because of this digital entropy. Overall, from the selected literature in this chapter it seems that there is an expectation of closure as to whether or not the *Green Movement* ‘succeeded’, however, I would argue that the reality lies somewhere in between. General points about the *Green Movement*’s structural capacities were analyzed from the following literature, “Revolutionary Iran” by Michael Axworthy, “‘WHERE IS MY VOTE?’ ICT Politics in the Aftermath of Iran’s Presidential Election”, Hadi Sohrabi-Haghighat and Shohre Mansouri, and “Democracy in Iran” by Misagh Parsa. These first two works address two key issues: the role of decentralization in the *Green Movement* and then ICTs; Parsa takes on a comprehensive socio-historical approach starting from the 1905 revolution looking at *18 Tir*’s relation to the formation of the *Green Movement*. These works tend to share the common need to establish some sort of definitive conclusion as to what resulted from the *Green Movement*, yet it seems people within Iran are still trying to remove the current regime from power as evidenced in the uprising in December 2017 and the early months of 2018.

It is important to also consider another factor about the conflicting information concerning the collection of Internet penetration rate data from within Iran. Bahram Pourghadiri, the founder of the London-based marketing firm Netbina, also questions the reliability of



available data on Iran's Internet penetration rate, in particular he is critical of Internetworldstats.com because of its unclear sourcing methods.<sup>185</sup> This is similar to the finding in Chapter 4 where two sources of Internet penetration statistics including the aforementioned one were contrasted, and the results were very dissimilar. There is an affiliate of Iran's Information Technology Organization (ITC) known as Matma, which collects such data, and in 2013 they claimed Internet penetration rates in Iran were around 49%.<sup>186</sup> Internet Live Stats published a figure for 2016 at 48.9%<sup>187</sup> and Internet World Stats in 2009 placed it at 48.5%.<sup>188</sup> For the years of 2009, 2013, and 2016 across different sources they all reach almost the same percentage, this demonstrates how inaccurate the process of keeping track of Internet penetration rates in general with Iran is. Collection is plagued with inconsistencies, due to an interest in keeping the actual statistics from reaching the public. More recent up-to-date information from the official Matma page could not be obtained as of this writing, because the listed link appears to be down, or the page was perhaps moved.<sup>189</sup> The organization bases its information from the different types of Internet data subscriptions in existence to make their claims about internet penetration.<sup>190</sup> There is the potential in this report for a person who subscribes to different web providers such as ADSL, Wimax, and Cellphone providers to counted as three separate

<sup>185</sup> Pourghadiri, "The Bewildering Maze of Internet Usage statistics in Iran".

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> "Internet Users by Country (2016)," *Internet Live Stats* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://www.Internetlvestats.com/Internet-users-by-country/>.

<sup>188</sup> "Middle East Internet Usage Statistics, Population, Facebook and Telecommunications Reports," *Internet World Stats* online, last modified January 1, 2014, <http://Internetworldstats.com/stats5.htm>.

<sup>189</sup> Pourghadiri, "The Bewildering Maze of Internet Usage statistics in Iran".

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

individuals.<sup>191</sup> However, there was consideration of the possibility that ADSL connections may be shared by more than one person. To correct for this margin of error this agency applied an undisclosed algorithm to determine that number, mobile subscribers were assumed to not share their web connections with others.<sup>192</sup> The problem with such a lack of transparency is that any estimates about Internet usage in Iran, or any country for that matter, is the tendency to manipulate the outcome to meet a certain agenda which often is to hide the truth about the actual numbers. Another issue is that areas where the Internet is shared by multiple individuals such as Internet cafes are not factored into determining Internet penetration rates.

The overall work *Revolutionary Iran* by Michael Axworthy chronicles different events that built up to the *Green Movement*. His insights about the desires represented by the *Green Movement* helps give readers a glimpse into the deep structural complexities at work within the movement. He discourages comparing the *Green Movement* to events that took place in other countries where the political dynamics are very different:

Comparisons are sometimes made between contemporary Iran and the former Soviet Union. Is Iran the Soviet Union of the twenty-first century? No... and yes. Taken strategically, the comparison is dangerously misleading (and unfortunately, for various reasons, there are some who are ready to mislead, and to be misled).<sup>193</sup>

Iran's *Green Movement* is unique unto itself, before it there were social movements in other countries, which were mostly western and with very different dynamics. Another important aspect of this statement is that comparisons should be made with as much caution as possible

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Michael Axworthy, *Revolutionary Iran: a History of the Islamic Republic* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 411.

since they often can mislead instead of developing valuable insights. This work also tackles the question of democracy in Iran where:

Some have suggested that this is the most important aspect of the events of 2009 – that they marked the renewal of the Iranian people’s commitment to the principles of democracy and freedom. But a functioning democracy, in which the will of the people is expressed through elections and determines the nature of the ruling government – no, Iran does not yet have that.<sup>194</sup>

This further validates the historical precedent in Iran to operate as a fully functioning democracy. With the current government that is not possible, but there is a strong desire among Iranians to change that. Use of the word renewal in the analysis also is significant because it means there was a drive in the past. Since the constitution is manipulated to suit the regime’s whim, this makes it very difficult to accomplish a democracy which represents the people.<sup>195</sup> The current form of governance despite many attempts at reform is therefore not compatible with democracy as it does not represent the Iranian people’s vision of society.

It was because of such incompatibility the Green Movement was unable to create change without using *Meydan Expressionism* like April 6 which was able to oust President Mubarak. In that context, however, there was not a solid plan as to how the country would be managed in a post-Mubarak era which led to the Muslim Brotherhood, a more established political group, hijacking the government after the ousting of Mubarak. In both cases there was a loss of or disassociation from the core values which amounted to the strength of the two social movements subsiding to a certain extent with the core problem, governments in power which are incompatible with the concept of democracy.

<sup>194</sup>Axworthy, *Revolutionary Iran*, 414.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

By contrast Hadi Sohrabi-Haghighat and Shohre Mansouri examine the role of ICTs in shaping the *Green Movement*.<sup>196</sup> Sohrabi-Haghighat and Mansour's postulation is that ICTs provided an important role in the organizational frameworks for the *Green Movement*.<sup>197</sup> They explain that the number of mobile users is double that of Internet users and that Bluetooth was used to counteract slow Internet speeds.<sup>198</sup> This hints at the role of mobile devices possibly being equal or more influential than traditional web access, similar conclusions were reached in Chapter 4. Their article helps open a dialog toward viewing ICTs from a less stagnant perspective and one which accepts multiple ways activists stay connected. Sohrabi-Haghighat et al. add that, "The Internet's resilience against censorship and State regulation provides social movements with a valuable possibility to disseminate information, recruit people and organize events out of the States' control."<sup>199</sup> This further validates the cultural autonomy which exists online to a certain extent thanks to the proponents of Net Neutrality. However, they explain in Iran the state's role of censorship became much more complex in preventing people from using the World Wide Web to their advantage. Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) out of fear in 2010 purchased at least 51% of Telecommunication company shares.<sup>200</sup> Their text concludes with the idea that it will take more than "mouse clicks"<sup>201</sup> to get rid of the regime alluding to a conclusion that there may be an issue with the organization itself, if the *Green Movement* was unable to achieve its primary goals. Sohrabi-Haghighat et al.'s work seems to be one of a kind

<sup>196</sup> M. Hadi Sohrabi-Haghighat and Shohre Mansouri, "'Where is my vote?' ICT Politics in the Aftermath of Iran's Presidential Election," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society* 8, no. 1 8 (2010): 24-41.

<sup>197</sup> Sohrabi-Haghighat and Mansouri, "'Where is my vote?,'" 24.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

with its inclusion of ICTs in its framework where to date similar works studying the *Green Movement* do not take that approach.

More recently in 2016, perhaps what could be the most comprehensive material on the *Green Movement* has been published. This work, discusses the *Green Movement* from a socio-political context inclusive of the 1905 Revolution and *18 Tir* in its analysis, something lacking in previous work. In particular, what stands out is his clear delineation between reformist and revolutionary paths Iranians could take in the future. Where,

In sum, the Islamic Republic has generated multiple, irreconcilable conflicts--rooted in the core of the theocracy-- that are too extensive to be reformed. The Islamic Republic's rulers have systematically downgraded the people's role in the state and rejected democratic transformation.<sup>202</sup>

The significant aspect of the Islamic Republic's inability to reform seems to be glossed-over in other literature. Parsa makes it clear that reform cannot be possible when the theocracy at its core has values which cannot be reconciled with the people's desires. Although ICTs were not discussed his attention to detail concerning this central issue is crucial to keep in mind when sifting through the data collected through online sources. An important first step is to know what the people want, otherwise data collected from online activity will prove to be irrelevant if it does not reflect the people's objectives.

In terms of the issue of reform or revolution, Parsa makes a distinction between the two paths, another unique difference which stands out from most of the literature on this social movement. He explains,

In the revolutionary route, democratic challengers disrupt the institutional mechanisms and forcibly remove the political elites or compel them to resign. In

<sup>202</sup> Misagh Parsa, *Democracy in Iran: Why it Failed and How it Might Succeed*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 320.

the reform route the dimensions of conflicts are limited and reconcilable, while in the revolutionary route the conflicts remain multidimensional and are often irreconcilable. In other words, a high level of cohesion between state and society contributes to democratization through reform; in contrast, a low level of cohesion between state and society channels democratization through a revolutionary route.<sup>203</sup>

This echoes the type of paths which were foreshadowed over a century ago by Von Stein, demonstrating the depth in detail of Parsa's work. Whenever a theory or prediction can appear more than once under slightly different definitions, it is a sign of its value and practical application. This was seen in Asef Bayat and Ömer Şener's theories of fun as contention. The distinction between reform and revolution is very important given that the *Green Movement* was overtaken by reformists, which then infringed upon its inclusiveness and restricted its revolutionary capacity. Most literature about the *Green Movement* leaves out the socio-historical framing and the discussion of revolution or reform is almost absent.

Both works cover important questions as to the *Green Movement's* capacity to fulfill its goals, it tends to be understood as possibly more decentralized and dependent on ICTs than it ought to be. This ties back to the historical foundation discussed in Chapter 3 where despite a more decentralized approach there were tensions running deep in the newer Iranian generation with hopes for change across the nation. This is much more than the mouse clicks as described by Sohrabi-Haghighat et al. To date in 2018, many people are finding ways to co-optively express their thoughts by wearing green or chanting in front of government officials at unexpected times. This was more than an amorphous gathering, millions did not take to the streets on a whim but did so because of the daily struggles they endured for years and continue to

<sup>203</sup> Parsa, *Democracy in Iran*, 320.

endure. The following sections will evaluate the different ways social movements that followed share features with the *Green Movement* and the possible reasons behind the variance in results.

## ***The Arab Spring***

### **Preface**

The *Arab Spring* is perhaps the only set of movements that arose in the Middle East which are analyzed in a more collective manner to observe trends in the region, generally Iran and Turkey remain absent from such overviews despite their close geographic proximity and are part of the Muslim world. This can be problematic since limitations will arise when restricting the narrative to Tunisia as the start, without reference to Iran in terms of establishing a timeline of events, correlated or not. It is also important to see the socio-political implications a social movement in Turkey may have on the Arab world. Looking beyond these potential setbacks there is a rich array of material which emphasizes the *Arab Spring* in an attempt to make sense of the chaos which ensued post-Tunisia.

Overall, it is clear that there were some prominent trends among these various protests including the intergenerational struggle for change present in what was described by Mahmood Monshipouri as in his work *The New Middle East and the United States: What to Expect After the Uprisings?* where he explains:

The democratic uprisings in North Africa demonstrate that maintaining order and stability can no longer be divorced from upholding human rights, human security, and social justice. The young generation of educated men and women throughout the Arab world and beyond appear to be more open and sympathetic to a liberal, constitutional order. Increasingly, this generation has shown more interest in addressing economic and political grievances, including the issues of governmental competence, corruption, and growth, than grand ideological statements. The leaderless uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and the rest of the

Arab world attest to the fact that the time has come to end the bargain with autocrats.<sup>204</sup>

It is becoming more and more evident that there is a growing desire among the youth and more educated classes in many countries of the Middle East to associate stability with demands for change based on human rights principles. Another interesting aspect is the idea that revolution is taking precedent over reform, as often rough governments are not capable of meeting the demands of their civilians in rational ways. With that in mind it is important to consider the outcomes of such petitions as described by Asef Bayat in his work, *The Arab Spring* and its surprises, "A surprising element here is that on the morrow of these overwhelmingly civil and non-religious uprisings, it was mainly the Islamic parties that assumed parliamentary and governmental power".<sup>205</sup> Out of the numerous incidents which arose there was a shift away from secular thought at some stage in the different movements of the *Arab Spring*, some of the factors include more conservative groups existing for a longer time and therefore were more well-established and were ultimately better able to take advantage of a gap in political leadership.

In effect many of the social movements from the *Arab Spring* began in a peaceful manner but went off in two directions: either to retain their values and solidarity up until a government is overthrown or take a violent turn and descend into chaos. There was an increase in the number of movements sharing the same essential goal of human rights-based, secular democracy in large part because of changing demographics. Yet, even those demographic conditions remain very complex as unexpected outcomes followed to varying degrees in each of the countries that were

<sup>204</sup> Mahmood Monshipouri and Ali Assareh. "The New Middle East and the United States: What to Expect after the Uprisings?," *Insight Turkey* 13, no. 3 (2011): 133.

<sup>205</sup> Asef Bayat, "The *Arab Spring* and its Surprises," *Development and Change* 44, no. 3 (2013): 592.



part of the *Arab Spring*. In reviewing different available literature some possible explanations, trends, and areas to research in more detail were revealed. Another issue that results when the *Arab Spring* is lumped together as a singular movement, is the fact each country operated under a unique set of attributes despite being Arabic-speaking and geographically contiguous, they were worlds apart in terms of issues, values, and political goals. The countries that remained stable after these social movements reached their peaks were Tunisia and Egypt. By contrast violent and unexpected outcomes took place in Bahrain and Syria. This chapter will overview each social movement on the basis of its Internet penetration rates, mobile subscription rates, available literature, and a socio-historical overview.

## Tunisia

In Tunisia around 2011 the Internet penetration rate was 39% according to internal statistics which rose to 49% in 2015 according to the ITU.<sup>206</sup> The mobile subscription rates rose from 115 per 100 people in 2011 to 130 per 100 people in 2015.<sup>207</sup> It would appear, based on this data, that there is a lesser proportion of access to the World Wide Web, however, mobile devices seem to be available in more abundance. There is a high possibility that ICTs could be utilized through the mobile handsets of activists at the very least are able to use other communicative

<sup>206</sup> "Individuals using the Internet (% of population)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-TN-SY-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

<sup>207</sup> "Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-SY-TN-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

capabilities with their devices. At the very least people were able to mobilize protests in a relatively cohesive and organized manner which led to the downfall of then president Ben Ali.

Around a year and a half later after the *Green Movement* began, Mohamad Bouazizi, an unemployed university graduate chose to become a street vendor in Tunisia. He ran a produce cart, which was confiscated by police under the pretext he was without a permit to sell vegetables and he refused to pay a bribe. Bouazizi sought to get justice by reporting the incident to government officials only to be barred from entering a provincial government building. Out of the frustration that resulted he took an extreme measure to make his voice heard in a form of protest against corruption and troubling economic conditions in Tunisia by setting himself on fire on December 17, 2010 and finally expiring from his injuries on January 4, 2011. This incident is likely to be one of the most crucial aspects of the *Arab Spring* because it represents several problems that are plaguing the region: police and government corruption, foul politics, economic inequality, inflation, lack of political freedom, restrictions on free speech, and the abuse of citizens to name a few.

Not long after this incident outrage was sparked across Tunisia with protesters taking to the. Due to the continuous nature of these protests similar to *Meydan Expressionism* the interior minister imposed a night curfew to curb the resistance on January 11, 2011 but Ben Ali stepped down only three days later on January 14.<sup>208</sup> The example of Tunisia likely set the stage for upcoming movements in Arabic-speaking regions in specific with their goal to remove the

<sup>208</sup> Angelique Chrisafis and Ian Black, "Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali forced to flee Tunisia as protesters claim victory" last modified January 15, 2011.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/14/tunisian-president-flees-country-protests>.

regime of Ben Ali. In the span of 28 days<sup>209</sup> Ben Ali, an established leader who ruled the country for almost 24 years from 1987 to 2011, fled from power.<sup>210</sup> ICTs also helped the Tunisians communicate their unrest about the growing social divide within their society. Lack of freedom, corruption and high unemployment brought people together from all corners of society including students and laborers. The protests were mostly composed of youth, who remained on the streets in the face of extreme violence day and night until their goals were achieved. Much of the country's youth shared and experienced Bouazizi's struggle on a daily basis. As a result, Tunisians were motivated to stand up against corrupt norms and remove Ben Ali from power by peaceful means and he fled to Saudi Arabia. Compared to other nations in the Arab world, Tunisia likely was more capable of establishing secular democracy because of a high rate of education and as of 2012 the drive toward its laws not based on Sharia<sup>211</sup>. It was the first country for women in the Arab world to establish the most advanced type of family law which abolished forced marriages and allowed for equality in divorces<sup>212</sup> Ben Ali's removal from power brought hope to the Middle East.

Upon his being ousted, Tunisia faced the challenge of the Islamist Party Ennahda (founded in 1981) winning the majority vote in their first free elections since 1956, held in 2013. The group began to face growing criticism by Tunisians over concerns that the political agenda was becoming increasingly conservative. Also, civilians were even more uncomfortable with the

<sup>209</sup> Elizabeth Day, "The slap that sparked a revolution" last modified May 15, 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/15/arab-spring-tunisia-the-slap>

<sup>210</sup> Chrisafis and Black, "Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali forced to flee."

<sup>211</sup> "Tunisia's Constitution will not be Based on Sharia: Islamist party," AFP online, last modified March 27, 2012, <https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/03/27/203529.html>

<sup>212</sup> Gabriel Sawma, "Muslim Divorce in Tunisia" last modified July 12, 2013. <http://gabrielsawma.blogspot.nl/2013/07/muslim-divorce-in-tunisia.html>

assassination of two major leftist politicians, Chokri Belaid (in February 2013) and Mohamad Brahmi (in July 2013).<sup>213</sup> This created a very tense situation bordering on a potential crisis with large protests starting to form again. However, the different opposing parties met and negotiated a pact where the Ennahda party could remove itself from power allowing for a more progressive future in Tunisia with the drafting of a new constitution and another round of elections.

This movement seemed to take on a similar stance as the *Green Movement* because of its focus on humanitarian goals and the removal of a government that did not represent its own civilians and constantly disrespected them. There was also a shared fear of violent government retaliation. A key difference is the *Green Movement* participants did not persist and continue after nightfall, by contrast the government in Tunisia had to set curfews to keep people from protesting after dark. Also, in Tunisia and Egypt activists were much more vocal. They continued in the tradition of associating symbols with their movements. Bouazizi and his sacrifice became symbols for the movement, it was titled the “Jasmine Revolution” after its national flower, indicative of its grassroots nature and shared struggle.<sup>214</sup> The April 6 movement uses that date as a reminder of when it was founded in 2008 eventually building up into the 2011 peak with the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak.<sup>215</sup> Tunisia is a strong example of *Meydan*

*Expressionism* at work: the people refused to leave their grounds at any cost. This was effective

<sup>213</sup> James Legge, "Tunisia shocked by assassinations: Opposition leaders Mohamed Brahmi and Chokri Belaid killed with the same gun" last modified July 26, 2013. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/tunisia-shocked-by-assassinations-opposition-leaders-mohamed-brahmi-and-chokri-belaid-killed-with-8733972.html>.

<sup>214</sup> "Tunisian blogger claims 'Jasmine Revolution' slogan," *The Independent* online, last modified January 19, 2011, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/tunisian-blogger-claims-jasmine-revolution-slogan-2188340.html>.

<sup>215</sup> "April 6 Youth Movement - Revolution in Cairo," *PBS Frontline* online, last modified March 23, 2008, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/revolution-in-cairo/inside-april6-movement/>.

to the extent that even the Tunisian Military refused to heed Ben Ali's orders to shoot at protesters, unlike the police.<sup>216</sup> The Army in Egypt also did not follow Mubarak's order to shoot at protesters, which appears to have been a common trend.<sup>217</sup>

An article was authored at European University Institute regarding the role of ICTs during the period of the Jasmine revolution.<sup>218</sup> They made note of mobile device usage to be of importance in the mobilization process.<sup>219</sup> Al-Jazeera appeared to have played a vital role as well, as it provided unrestricted news via satellite.<sup>220</sup> In Tunisia the Internet, mobile devices and satellite television helped disseminate the will of its people. Tunisians stood by their beliefs, unwavering even in the face of threats and proposed concessions by Ben Ali, who tried almost every possible tactic to remain in power until the end of his term in 2014, but to no avail. Ben Ali even went as far as doing a photo op when he visited Mohamad Bouazizi at his deathbed to illustrate affinity for the Tunisian people.<sup>221</sup>

Another study at the University of Siegen in Germany attempted to obtain information directly from Tunisians, but there were issues of trust and security concerns.<sup>222</sup> The authors also

<sup>216</sup> William Maclean, "Tunisia army pivotal to Ben Ali ousting: reports" last modified January 17, 2011. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-protests-army-idUSTRE70G52B20110117>

<sup>217</sup> Tony Karon, "Egyptian Military Proving to Be Rival Power Center to Mubarak" last modified February 01, 2011. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2045455,00.html>

<sup>218</sup> Ben Wagner, "The Arab Spring| I Have Understood You": The Co-evolution of Expression and Control on the Internet, Television and Mobile Phones During the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia," *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011): 8.

<sup>219</sup> Wagner, "The Arab Spring| I Have Understood You," 1298.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., 1297.

<sup>221</sup> Chrisafis and Black, "Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali forced to flee".

<sup>222</sup> Volker Wulf, Kaoru Misaki, Meryem Atam, David Randall, and Markus Rohde. "On the Ground in Sidi Bouzid: Investigating Social Media use during the Tunisian Revolution," *In Proceedings of the 2013 Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work* (2013): 1409-1418.

believed that ICTs were important but should not be overemphasized<sup>223</sup>. Tunisia presents a ray of hope that it is possible to overthrow a brutal dictatorship and establish a secular democratic government in its place. At this moment it appears the movement was motivated by a lack of freedom, rampant corruption, and economic pressures. Highly educated populations in Tunisia were also a strong factor that led to the removal of Ben Ali. This basis for their popular demands in turn was amplified through the usage of ICTs and other communication methods leading to countrywide protests. A major transformation took place over a very short period where decades of tyranny vanished in less than a month.

To date, Tunisia is the only country in the Middle East that was able to successfully oust its dictator by peaceful means and afterward establish a relatively functional democratic and secular government although to date is still a work in progress. Recently, people took to the streets again in the form of *Meydan Expressionism* to speak their minds against the possibility of a bill or law to be passed that would allow corrupt businessmen to, in effect, be granted amnesty for their actions during Ben Ali's rule.<sup>224</sup> It is known that people took to the streets but the exact or approximate numbers remain unclear across various sources. It also was unclear as to the types of media they used most, outside of brief highlights on ICTs, satellite TV, and TCM usage in the European University journal article. Part of the problem being that several years have passed without a major conflict and therefore, does not call much attention to the movement at present. As of 2017, corruption remains as a daily issue negatively affecting most of the

<sup>223</sup> Wulf et al. "On the ground in Sidi Bouzid: investigating social media use during the Tunisian revolution."

<sup>224</sup> "Corruption Enrages Tunisians," *The New York Times The Editorial Board* online, last modified June 4, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/04/opinion/tunisia-corruption-unemployment.html>.

population which led to new protests in what may result is a second revolution, described by some as “more serious” than the last.<sup>225</sup> This also exemplifies that when a social movement seems to accomplish its aim of removing a government, it does not guarantee corrupt practices will disappear from one day to the next.

## Egypt

The overall Internet penetration rates in Egypt are all provided by the ITU and rose from 26% in 2011 to 38% in 2015.<sup>226</sup> Mobile subscription rates in 2011 were around 105 per 100 people and became 111 by 2015.<sup>227</sup> A similar proportion arises compared to Tunisia in terms of Internet penetration rates versus access to mobile subscriptions. It would seem the Internet penetration rate is lower. The common area of a high number of mobile handsets among the Egyptian population may also indicate that this is a major source of potential access to the World Wide Web. A journal article “The Arab Spring: Ideals of the Iranian *Green Movement*, Methods of the Iranian Revolution” by Charles Kurzman explained Secularists and Islamists alike in Iran tried to claim themselves as influencing factors toward the Arab Spring’s rise.<sup>228</sup>

<sup>225</sup> "Thousands protest Tunisia's corruption amnesty bill," *Aljazeera* online, last modified May 13, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/thousands-protest-tunisia-corruption-amnesty-bill-170513184723310.html>.

<sup>226</sup> "Individuals using the Internet (% of population)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-TN-SY-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

<sup>227</sup> "Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-SY-TN-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

<sup>228</sup> Charles Kurzman, "The *Arab Spring*: Ideals of the Iranian Green Movement, Methods of the Iranian Revolution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44, no. 1 (2012): 163.

A pivotal point in Kurzman's article highlights potential relationships between social movements in Iran and Egypt. It was noted that activists within Egypt frowned upon the idea of the Islamic cultural revolution in Iran as a source of influence, "A statement by Egyptian activists denounced Khamenei, for trying to drive a wedge in the nation's fabric by talking about an Islamic revolution in an attempt to eliminate our Coptic brothers from our revolution."<sup>229</sup> The fact that it was possible for Khamenei to make such an outlandish claim and that it had credence shows there is little discussion about how political manifestations in Iran may be related to those in Egypt or the *Arab Spring*. Under such a context unsubstantiated hypothesis like Khamenei's likening the *Arab Spring* to an "Islamic Awakening", are possible.<sup>230</sup> At the same time, the perspective of Mousavi was included in the article to provide balanced information where he stated,

The starting point of what we are now witnessing on the streets of Tunis, Sanaa, Cairo, Alexandria and Suez can be undoubtedly traced back to days of 15th, 18th and 20th June 2009 when people took to the streets of Tehran in millions shouting 'Where is my vote' and peacefully demanded to get back their denied rights.<sup>231</sup>

His statement calls attention to the interconnected reality that can exist between social movements, in particular those with similar motivations. This type of discussion often does not appear to be considered enough or at all in either academia or mainstream media.

Kurzman indicates that unlike the *Green Movement* the *Arab Spring* was similar to the 1979 Iranian Revolution in being able to oust a regime from power.<sup>232</sup> That comparison is misleading because although the *Arab Spring* was similar to the 1979 Iranian Revolution in the

<sup>229</sup> Kurzman. "The *Arab Spring*: Ideals of the Iranian *Green Movement*", 163

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 163.



way opposition groups gathered, the demand for change and the methods and instruments used in the *Arab Spring* were more similar to the *Green Movement*. Social movements should be analyzed in a holistic manner taking all sources of influence and accomplishments into consideration to avoid hasty or misleading generalizations. That comparative study helped address such issues, however more need to be conducted, it is among the few that analyze both the *Green Movement* and other social movements. There is another section that seems to make a broad generalization from a relatively small sample. The following passage attempted in a comparative discussion applied to that data, mentioned the perspective of “Arab activists” to the two claims of Iranian precedent of a secular or religious origin behind the *Arab Spring*:

The response from Arab activists to these Iranian claims of influence was: neither. During the first two weeks of Twitter postings with hashtag #Jan25 the main keyword for the Egyptian uprising that began on 25 January 2011 only 69 out of 42,466 tweets referred to Iran, and only 3 of these were in Arabic. Most were postings by Iranians or links to Western news reports, and none gave credit to Iranian precedent.<sup>233</sup>

The first question, which crops up is who are these “Arab” activists? It could be read as ‘Egyptians’ but it is somewhat vague when dealing with specific facts. Even then there is no guarantee that all of those posts were even made by the Egyptian activists themselves. The analyzed tweets were mostly in English with three posts in Arabic calling into question the demographics, as well. This analysis assumes that scarce mention of Iran on twitter under the narrow #Jan25 hashtag meant that activists of the *Arab Spring* did not feel a sense of connection or made reference to the *Green Movement*. Furthermore, when said tweets were generated it is unlikely that activists would be doing a socio-political analysis on twitter about the origins of their movement. The number of tweets was not representative of the entire movement in Egypt

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 162.

or the *Arab Spring* by looking at a specific date under one hashtag term and then generalizing from that data. Although impressive in filtering an estimated 40,000 tweets, the focus of this section in the article appears to not be broad enough and may be compromised in its quality as a measure of how the two movements were related. Even if there were no direct links between the *Green Movement* and the *Arab Spring*, they likely share a rhizomatic relationship where activists in the *Arab Spring* need, at the very least, only watch the news of *Green Movement* in 2009 to have in their minds the idea of resistance against repressive regimes as being possible solution to their authoritarian circumstances.

I spoke with different activists from the *Arab Spring*, many of them agreed that the *Green Movement* brought positive energy and hope for the people in Tunisia and Egypt about defending human rights values and the potential of ICTs as tool for mobilization. This journal article calls attention to the level of confusion that can arise surrounding the study of social movements in addition to possible overemphasis on ICTs as a source for information. Again it is important to remember the dangers of this unreliability of ICTs given the high level of information decay that results from *Digital Content Temporality*. In general, for research to be conducted on online posts, the data collected should be broader and analyzed in the most comprehensive way possible. It is important for future research to be at the forefront of collecting data as it is published, not just retroactively due to the often temporary nature of which information is published. For example, tweets often will be removed or disappear with the passing of time, requiring alternate more complex measures of recovering that lost data.

The *Meydan Expressionism* style of mobilization which was missing in the *Green Movement* was present in Tahrir Square in an even stronger form than what manifested in

Tunisia and then spread further to other parts of the world. The *Green Movement*'s major contribution would likely be its ability to mobilize participants by the millions on a national and international scale. Yet there was a level of inclusivity present during the April 6 movement that cannot be said of the *Green Movement*, wherein reformists attempted to make their movement exclusive and to make use of it to suit their own agenda. The combination of millions of demonstrators and *Meydan Expressionism* in Egypt led to a much more pronounced presence during the April 6th Movement.

The *Green Movement* by comparison at its peak of 3 million had its protesters go home after dark and did reach that same height, as of this writing. By contrast, in Egypt because activists did not go home and remained in Tahrir utilizing *Meydan Expressionism* it was possible for President Mubarak to be pressured into stepping down. The exact degree of the *Green Movement*'s influence on social movements in Egypt is subject to contention, but protesters were mobilized by the millions in conjunction with ICTs, very similar to what occurred in the *Green Movement* for the first time globally. In terms of how events were timed the *Green Movement* was the first social movement in recent years to use these types of innovative strategies on such a large scale. The *April 6 Movement* was capable of avoiding certain mistakes because it had access to a rich array of information on the *Green Movement* and other previous social movements through the World Wide Web to help strengthen the capacity for change.

As for a more direct relationship between social movements, there were collaborations between activists from the *April 6* movement and members of a Serbian Political party known as Otpor! active from 1998 to 2004 who overthrew Milošević by non-violent means with protests as high as 70,000. Members from this group helped train activists of *April 6* by imparting

knowledge that would likely be useful when put into practice.<sup>234</sup> Even though there were not direct collaborations between organizers of the *Green Movement* and *April 6*, there was an indirect relationship based on shared values and goals. With the additional training from members of Otpor! there may be certain tactics that were put in to practice that may or may not have been present in the *Green Movement* that helped enrich the *April 6 Movement*.

A major drawback of the *April 6 Movement* despite its best efforts the organizers were not part of the political establishment nor were prepared enough to overtake it. The plan for a post-Mubarak Egypt was not conducted in the most effective way as the Muslim brotherhood was able to intervene. It was and is a political party in existence for nearly a century, founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928 who established a longstanding political, social and historical tradition in the country.<sup>235</sup> Because of their being established for such a long period of time and involvement with giving back to different communities in Egypt to build their reputation, the Muslim brotherhood became a source of identity for large numbers of people. They ended up with a strong base of supporters which could help them accomplish their own goals seeking to establish a political system based of Islamic values. Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, the *April 6 Movement* did not have enough experienced candidates from the movement to run for key political positions (including the presidency) following the collapse of the Mubarak regime. A political void was left as a consequence— which the Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of when Mohammed Morsi was elected president in July 2012. The Muslim Brotherhood, however,

<sup>234</sup> "Egyptians bring down dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak, 2011," *Swarthmore College* online, last modified January 7, 2017, <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/egyptians-bring-down-dictatorship-hosni-mubarak-2011>.

<sup>235</sup> Julie Spears, "Muslim Brotherhood" last modified January 8, 2002. <https://fas.org/irp/world/para/mb.htm>

was ousted a year later in 2013 by the Egyptian Military after it gathered crowds massive enough to topple the Morsi regime. Localized interventions played a role in taking the outcome of Mubarak's removal into unexpected direction with more negative and volatile consequences.

The *April 6 Movement* was able to gain a massive and steady following over a short period of time. It is of interest because the *Green Movement's* massive numbers did not begin with a revolutionary stance, but *April 6* did. Not only in that the *April 6* movement was inclusive of all social and political groups who shared the same values and goals, whereas the inclusivity of the *Green Movement* was in danger of being manipulated by reformists who did not want absolute change and removal of the regime. In terms of intergenerational struggle for change, there was a social movement that predated the *April 6 Movement* known as the *Kefaya Movement* (Enough Movement) which started in 2004 but operated on a more philosophical/ideological level.

One of its goals was to prevent a transfer of power from Hosni Mubarak to his son Gamal. The Kefaya movement gained support in part through some usage of ICTs by establishing a web page, <http://harakamasria.org><sup>236</sup> They wrote a Manifesto in English which could reach a broader audience expressing their positions on various economic, political, and social problems Egyptians must overcome.<sup>237</sup> The Kefaya Movement operated a Facebook page which had about 52,831 members and 52,428 people followers in late 2016 the numbers changed to 52,391 and 51,998 as of May 2017.<sup>238</sup> Part of the reason why it was not able to carry on with

<sup>236</sup> "Declaration to the Nation," *Kifaya Movement* online, last modified January 18, 2013, <http://web.archive.org/web/20130118143556/http://harakamasria.org/node/2944>.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> "*Kefaya Movement* - حركة كفاية," *Kefaya Movement* online, last modified June 17, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/Kefaya.Movement/>

such widespread appeal like the latter April 6 Movement was that there were possibly too many goals and likely infighting or splits followed. In the Kefaya movement's own words, "The designs, including the Broader Middle East Initiative, to recast the chart and fate of the Arab region and people."<sup>239</sup> Based on this language, the Kefaya Movement employed a more regional outlook that could possibly affect the level of focus on the interests of Egypt as a nation. They wanted to terminate the political monopoly, enforce the law, and that Egypt regain a meaningful and trustworthy role in the Arab world. This is a very bold statement that would likely garner the most participants, however still not enough to make a meaningful impact.<sup>240</sup> For a philosophical organization such a statement could be seen as revolutionary because it demanded sudden change and removal of the government. A similar line of thought likely served as foundation for the key aims of the April 6 Movement.

Unlike the Kefaya Movement, April 6 formed a more concise vision that focused on the nation's youth and labor movement at a time when unemployment was rapidly rising. They were able to accomplish demonstrations by the millions through their combined usage of ICTs and TCMs. The majority of people in Egypt were interested in the well-being of their nation on its own terms by peaceful means to resolve issues in the economy, corruption, and suppression of political expression.<sup>241</sup> This is, in particular, what makes the *April 6* movement stand out compared to other social/political movements in Egypt, because it emphasized the Egyptian peoples' national and cultural interest. It can be argued that *April 6* has a more narrow and focused perspective compared to the *Kefaya* movement that viewed Egypt in the context of the

<sup>239</sup> "Kefaya Movement - حركة كفاية."

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> "6th of April Youth Movement - إبريل 6 حركة شباب", *April 6* online, last modified April 23, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/pg/shabab6april/about>.

broader Arab world. The *April 6 Movement* aimed to operate on a grassroots level making note to not accept funds from any outside groups that could exert undue influence over the organizers.<sup>242</sup> This falls in line with the motto listed on the *April 6* Facebook page, “Life, Freedom and Justice, Support People”<sup>243</sup>. It is this type of logic that allowed for them to be open minded enough to work alongside other groups like the *Kefaya Movement* and the Muslim Brotherhood despite their differences in order to achieve the ultimate goal of toppling Mubarak.

The April 6 Movement formed in 2008, when a significant portion of the unrest was building up since the start of Mubarak’s term. They had their own web page [www.6April.org](http://www.6April.org), at the moment it appears to be offline. In fact, the only copy that could be procured was archived similarly to what was available for the Kefaya Movement page.<sup>244</sup> However, the April 6 Facebook page remains active with over a million people who follow it. In both cases it is evident that the more traditional method of web hosting appears to have been overshadowed by social media. ICTs alone were not enough, which is evident as the Kefaya movement has around fifty thousand people following on Facebook by comparison to the April 6 Movement with over one million and it continues to grow in popularity. One of the major benefits of having a service like Facebook available, despite many privacy concerns, it is more difficult for censoring entities to shut down specific pages hosted on a platform as large as Facebook. This is likely the reason that the April 6 page remained active on that domain. Although, the downside is should the Facebook page of either movement be removed, web archiving services do not preserve Facebook pages because it is expressly prohibited on the page’s robots.txt file. All websites have

<sup>242</sup> "6th of April Youth Movement - إبريل 6 حركة شباب -".

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

the option to exclude themselves from being automatically archived or cached by leaving notes in a file called robots.txt hosted on their server.<sup>245</sup>

The *April 6 Movement*'s Facebook page remains active in 2016 with 1,396,041 people like this and 1,365,286 people followers. Over the course of 2016, the Facebook page gained almost several hundred thousand new likes and followers.<sup>246</sup> By May 2017, it rose to 1,396,878 members and 1,367,018 followers.<sup>247</sup> Unlike the *Kefaya* movement between 2016 and early 2017, it seems the membership for *April 6* continues to rise at a very fast pace. The *April 6 Movement* page reached its milestone of one million members in 2015.<sup>248</sup> Posts are more frequent in the *April 6* Facebook page as well. Even with an unprecedented chain of events that followed the ousting of Mubarak, it appears that the *April 6 Movement* remains active to a certain extent even though many of its leaders having been incarcerated.<sup>249</sup> For example, one of its prominent leaders and co-founder Ahmad Maher was released on January 4th, 2017, according to the *Daily News Egypt*, "The activist is required to spend 6pm to 6am every day for three years at his district police station" for at least three years.<sup>250</sup> Even after spending 3 years in prison, the current interim government must be intimidated about the prospect of another bout of uprisings like those in 2011 to impose such a strict restriction upon his release.

<sup>245</sup> "Crawling Facebook is prohibited unless you have express written permission," *Facebook Robots.txt*. online, last modified July 15, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/robots.txt>.

<sup>246</sup> "6th of April Youth Movement - إبريل 6 حركة شباب".

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> David Wolman, "Reprisals for Revolutionaries" last modified February 11, 2014. [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/politics/2014/02/ahmed\\_maher\\_and\\_activists\\_imprisoned\\_egypt\\_s\\_revolutionaries\\_are\\_now\\_the.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2014/02/ahmed_maher_and_activists_imprisoned_egypt_s_revolutionaries_are_now_the.html)

<sup>249</sup> "6th of April Youth Movement - إبريل 6 حركة شباب".

<sup>250</sup> "Ahmed Maher Placed Under 3-Year Probation Following Release," *Daily News Egypt* online, last modified January 6, 2017, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2017/01/06/ahmed-maher-placed-3-year-probation-following-release/>.



The utilization of space and the language is important to examine the changes that took place between the *Kefaya Movement* and the *April 6 Movement*. The *Kefaya Movement* had a web page with forums, its overall operable nature is fairly interactive, even with a Facebook page as well. The key difference was how the *April 6 Movement*'s more narrow focus led to a massive influx of participation within a relatively short period of time. The Facebook page of *April 6* indicates how many people were more involved and in larger numbers sharing a message for the majority of Egypt's people who were young and desirous of change. The movement still remains active albeit on a more passive level.

Besides the *April 6 Movement*'s extensive web and social media campaign, one other prominent focal point is how the Khaled Said incident became a symbol for the movement. Said was taken outside of an Internet cafe and beaten to death by Egyptian police. A Facebook page designed to honor him amassed more than 70,000 likes.<sup>251</sup> It rose to 288,300 followers with the last post on May 1st.<sup>252</sup> Said's story became synonymous with *April 6* much in the same way; calling attention to the corrupt politics taking place within Egypt and in a way that would garner audiences both on a national and international level. In terms of organizational structure, it seems that the *April 6 Movement* relied extensively on ICTs more so than the *Kefaya* movement, evidenced in part by their active role on multiple types of pages with a high number of active users.

<sup>251</sup> Nahed Eltantawy and Julie B. Wiest, "The Arab Spring| Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Reconsidering Resource Mobilization Theory." *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011): 1212.

<sup>252</sup> "We are all Khaled Said," *We are all Khaled Said* online, last modified May 1, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/elshaheed.co.uk/>.

The overall successes and failures of the April 6 Movement are mixed. It did overthrow Mubarak but was not able to establish the Egypt its founders envisioned. The current situation is difficult to manage as the interim government has a tight grip over the activities of April 6 Movement organizers and followers, restricting their freedom to communicate their message. It appears, April 6 shares some similarities with the *Green Movement* apart from reaching a level capable of ousting a government. Collaborations with members of the Otpor! movement helped further enrich the organizational capacity of the April 6 Movement participants. Tunisia was likely to have been an important catalyst, as well, being the first social movement of the Arab Spring, which served as additional motivation for activists in Egypt. This helps illustrate the non-linear nature of how social movements build off of one another. Historical framing helps provide context for the underlying tensions that in turn evolve into demonstrations. Egypt is a potent example of the limitations of ICTs, the Kefaya and April 6 Movements operated independently of one another, but yielded very different results. This demonstrates the key ability of offline factors to influence how online communications and organizations unfold. Not long after came the Taksim Square (Gezi Park) movement in Turkey, which had massive numbers, exercised *Meydan Expressionism*, but in the end did not gain enough public support to be successful.

### *Taksim Square Gezi Park*

#### **Turkey**

The Internet penetration rates in Turkey as of 2013 were around 46% rising to 54% by 2015.<sup>253</sup> As far as mobile subscription rates are concerned 93 per 100 people were subscribing in 2013 and by 2015 it was around 96.<sup>254</sup> Turkey's Internet penetration rate is perhaps one of the highest trailing behind Bahrain. That in conjunction with moderate to high cellphone accessibility made way for the conditions where ICT usage was more prevalent and possible compared to Iran and Egypt when the *Green Movement* and *April 6 Movement* were at their respective peaks.

Turkey is typically regarded as one of the more stable countries in the Middle East, long known for its hope of entering the European Union. The Gezi Park / Taksim Square social movement in Turkey was perhaps one of the largest in the region comparable to the *Green Movement* and *April 6* and also followed similar philosophical principles of non-violence and seeking to end corrupt policies. However, the seemingly moderate President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's political actions became increasingly unfavorable to the public in Turkey. He had been in a position of high socioeconomic and political influence for over 10 years. What began as the protest over the government's interest in turning a park into a commercial property quickly became a catalyst for massive nationwide contention targeting broader problems within the

<sup>253</sup> "Individuals Using the Internet (% of population)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-TN-SY-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

<sup>254</sup> "Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-SY-TN-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

Turkish political establishment. Erdoğan has been making political moves of an increasingly authoritarian nature, his decision to take down Gezi park alongside his increasingly religious rhetoric set the precedent for an extensive number of protests in retaliation.

There were at least 3.5 million people who participated in around 5,000 protests within 2013 alone.<sup>255</sup> Compared to the *Green Movement* and *April 6*, The Taksim Square (Gezi Park) Movement seems to be a salient issue among a large number of the Turkish population but not the majority. The protestors retain a stance that is pro-democracy based on non-violence and human rights principles with an emphasis on defending secularism. Its overall sustainability was threatened by increasingly brutal suppressive measures put into place by Erdogan and the large numbers of people supporting him. It is concerning because his supporters pose a problem for the Gezi Park movement itself— with around half the nation rallying behind him. The public outcry against Erdogan and his policies was either met with public disdain or government suppression via teargas and similar suppressive tactics. The lack of near complete public support and fierce opposition from the government became a major obstacle. The lack of overwhelming public support affects the capacity of a social movement to change or oust a particular government. The overall effect of the movement appeared to attract attention but there was not enough momentum for it to create substantive change in the short-term.

Despite massive mobilizations forming in Turkey, there seems to be a lack of agreement over the overall composition and aim of the movement. There is enough motivation for the protestor's cause due to significant problems nationwide, yet the broader public is not under the

<sup>255</sup> Christopher De Bellaigue, "Turkey: 'Surreal, Menacing...Pompous' by Christopher De Bellaigue" last modified December 19, 2013, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/dec/19/turkey-surreal-menacing-pompous/>.

pressure of economic sanctions and a theocracy like in Iran, nor are they dealing with an authoritarian military regime, as in Egypt. Turkey is supposedly a moderate nation guided by Erdoğan. Government-incited violence tends to result in the form of tear gas but can reach more brutal extremes like in Egypt and Iran.

In terms of the actual aim it appears to be a major focal point is putting an end to rampant corruption as shown in the following excerpt from the web page Taksim Dayanışması chronicling the movement:

To remind the world that we have not given up on our demands and victories, as Taksim Solidarity we will be in the streets in Taksim! Millions of us, with all our different languages, voices and colors, are all together and in the streets! We're there with our 'few trees', with our desire, our ideas, our wish to live humane lives, our hope, our resistance, we're everywhere, out there in the streets, in the squares. We are in the streets for those squares that you have banned because you fear that we will rebel against your massacres, your corruption; because you fear that we will reclaim our cities, our common values, and the nature and living spaces which you have looted.<sup>256</sup>

The overall tone of this excerpt shows the significance of the resistance against the government's greed and corruption but does not show strong intentions of deposing present political leaders as had been done so from the start of the *April 6 Movement* and over the progression of the *Green Movement*. The topic of political action remains vague as the problem remains to be defined in a more concise and clear manner. "All languages, voices and colors" could be interpreted as being inclusive, another important factor as to why such large numbers of adherents appeared within short periods of time.

<sup>256</sup> Taksim Dayanışması, "We're Out There in the Streets, in the Squares!" last modified November 6, 2014. <http://taksimdayanisma.org/mejdandayiz?lang=en>

The Taksim Square (Gezi Park) Movement, despite its seemingly spontaneous nature, shows signs of Rhizome-type influence from the *Green Movement* and the *April 6 Movement* in how ICTs were used. It was the first time in Turkey's recent history that such large numbers of people came out to protest. These mass gatherings seemed to be more of a reaction to the government's circle of corruption and greed rather than issues that people wanted to resolve for generations.

Furthermore, the Taksim Square Movement does not have much in the way of a historical base compared to the Kemalist group in Turkey many of whom are in favor of state-led authoritarianism. The fractured socio-political make up of Turkey presents another set obstacles among the competing political factions. There are three major political groups: Pro-democracy Secularists, Islamists, and Nationalists. Beyond those groups there are followers of Erdogan's Party (Justice and Development Party), Kemalists, followers of the *Gülen Movement* (a prominent Islamic NGO), IS extremists from across the border, Leftists, Kurds, Alevi, including smaller groups like Armenians, among others. In specific the Kurds and Alevi were suppressed by the central government because of their ethnicity and religious identity which is secular but marries a strong demand for democracy and possible irredentism over a long period of time. When the rights of different groups are being infringed upon in Turkey on a regular basis it will experience many difficulties in forming a fully-functional democracy.

The use of fun as contention tended to be more frequent in the Taksim Square Movement due in part to some of the pressure on self-expression, although censorship was not as extreme compared to Iran or Egypt. In "The Gezi Protests, Polyphony and 'Carnavalesque Chaos'", Ömer

Şener<sup>257</sup> likens the protests to Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualization of carnival in 1971. It is defined as an active participatory experience which is not passive, providing a space for life that exists outside the external paradigm of societal laws.<sup>258</sup> What is also intriguing about the literature on the *Gezi Park Movement* was that it reached a similar conclusion about fun as a form of contention as to that of Asef Bayat in the *Politics of Fun*. This illustrates the type of pattern which transpires in political and social sciences where more than one person may end up with concepts to describe the same or a similar phenomenon. Much remains to be seen as to the exact future of the *Gezi Park Movement* because protests have seemed to dwindle since 2013.

In terms of the detailing Gezi Park Movement it seems that unlike the *Green Movement* or April 6 there is literature available in the form of a photo essay, which is both innovative and necessary. With the loss of countless material across social movements, photo essays may be a potential direction to help supplement the study of social movements and the preservation of relevant and important data for research. For example, *Meydan Expressionism* was evident and captured in at least two pages of a book compiling the works of various researchers on the Gezi Park Movement entitled *Reflections on Taksim-Gezi Park Protests in Turkey* by Bülent Gökay and Ilia Xypolia. One page depicts a hotel providing a source of electricity outdoors for activists to keep their cellphones charged.<sup>259</sup> Another image that stood out was a photo of tents pitched with a sign stating, "If we don't direct the world it won't spin."<sup>260</sup> These two images depict the behavior of *Meydan Expressionism* in action in ways words cannot exactly convey nor would

<sup>257</sup> Bülent Gökay and Ilia Xypolia, "Reflections on Taksim-Gezi Park Protests in Turkey," *Keele, Keele European Research Centre*, (2013): 40.

<sup>258</sup> Gökay et al. "Reflections on Taksim-Gezi Park Protests in Turkey," 40.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

they gain public awareness unless they were preserved in such a manner. This is a possible tactic toward preventing the loss of information attributed to *Digital Content Temporality*. To date there are likely thousands of important photos and videos that have been lost, removed, censored or otherwise purged by a massive influx of unrelated data over time due to an increase in the population of people with online access. Other forms of preserving the knowledge about the movement itself include the web page *Taksim Dayanışması*<sup>261</sup> and *Everywhere Taksim*<sup>262</sup> both of which remain unclear as to who their actual owners may be, possibly activists from the movement itself or people seeking to preserve its information. This differs from the pages found from the Kefaya and April 6 Movements of Egypt which were more likely managed by activists as they appear to be offline possibly due to government interference.

In terms of Symbolism there are two major images which remind people of the Gezi Park movement and both are provocative in different ways. One of which is perhaps the most contentious, in that it portrayed the death of a 15-year-old Alevi boy Berkin Elvan that took place on March 11, 2014 after being in a coma because a police gas canister struck him during the Gezi Park protests.<sup>263</sup> This was a very intense moment because it symbolizes the sectarian conflicts taking place in Turkey that impede the process of democratization. The Alevi community comprises 20-30% of the population as stated in the work *Globalization and*

<sup>261</sup> Dayanışması, "We're Out There in the Streets, in the Squares!"

<sup>262</sup> "Urgent Call from Turkey's Human Rights Organizations to the International Community," *Everywhere Taksim* online, last modified July 15, 2017, <http://everywheretaksim.net>.

<sup>263</sup> Rasim Ozan Kütahyalı, "Is Turkey heading toward Alevi-Sunni clashes?" last modified March 11, 2014. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/originals/2014/03/turkey-alevi-sunni-clash-erdogan-secular-media.html>



*Islamism: Beyond Fundamentalism* by Nevzat Soguk.<sup>264</sup> It was further elaborated in this work published in 2011 which discussed the position of Alevis in Turkey explaining that, "They also have acted as arbiters between modernity and Islam."<sup>265</sup> This research foreshadowed the types of pressures that were so prevalent during and after the Gezi park Movement where, "For more than seventy years, an uneasy balance prevailed across these elements of Islamic heritage, modern secularism, and the Turkish nation-statism."<sup>266</sup> After the death of Berkin Elvan became public knowledge around 2 million people across Turkey came out to the streets protesting in a similar form to the Gezi Park movement.<sup>267</sup> This was a very large and intense reaction on the level of how people were upset by the death of Khaled Said, although the circumstances of the deaths were different, both were at the hands of state supported police. Prior to the passing of Berkin Elvan almost one year earlier another image brought on global and national attention that involved a young woman known as Ceyda Sungur a research assistant at Istanbul Technical University who was gassed by police during the Gezi Park protest.<sup>268</sup> This image brought the world's attention to the brutality with which protesters were being subjected to in Turkey. It became symbolic of the types of struggles people were undergoing and was also related to by another large population in Turkey which was its youth seeking higher education.

<sup>264</sup> Nevzat Soguk, *Globalization and Islamism: Beyond Fundamentalism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub Inc, 2010): 98..

<sup>265</sup> Soguk, *Globalization and Islamism: Beyond Fundamentalism*, 98.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Cagaptay Soner, "Turkey's Slow-Burning Alevi Unrest" last modified March 24, 2014. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/turkeys-slow-burning-alevi-unrest>

<sup>268</sup> Amar Toor, "How a 'Lady in Red' became the symbol of Turkey's unrest" last modified June 7, 2013. <https://www.theverge.com/2013/6/7/4405412/ceyda-sungur-lady-in-red-photo-becomes-symbol-of-turkey-protests>

The Gezi Park movement at the very least highlighted the heights to which corruption was prevalent in Turkey, and its effects were feared by the government to the extent that Twitter was banned prior to the 2014 elections.<sup>269</sup> At this moment, it remains unclear as to what the future holds in terms of future uprisings in Turkey but there are many of whom who are not content with the way people are being treated and how the government is managed. Despite continued efforts of Meydan Expressionism the two main factors slowed down its progress significantly were the combination of police suppression and antagonism from Erdogan's supporters.

### ***The Umbrella Movement***

#### **Hong Kong**

In Hong Kong the Internet penetration rates are around 80% in 2014 rising to 85% by 2015.<sup>270</sup> When considering mobile subscription rates it has among the highest out of all the countries analyzed in this research with 234 per 100 people in 2014 and 229 in 2015.<sup>271</sup> This may explain how the activists were able to organize within such a small period of time and go global within a few weeks. The 2014 Hong Kong protests coalesced into what became known as the

<sup>269</sup> "Turkey: Pre-election Twitter shutdown brings Internet freedom to a new low," *Amnesty International* online, last modified March 21, 2014, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/03/turkey-pre-election-twitter-shutdown-brings-Internet-freedom-new-low/>

<sup>270</sup> "Individuals Using the Internet (% of Population)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-TN-SY-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

<sup>271</sup> "Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-SY-TN-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

“*Umbrella Revolution*” – perhaps one of the most recent *Political Expressionist* social movements that attracted global attention. The Rhizomatic process seems to be a strong element in the formation of this movement where even its name was created by a foreigner who was not directly connected to the movement itself, Adam Cotton on Twitter from the United States is believed to be responsible.<sup>272</sup> The title of the movement was derived from a single tweet made in reference to all of the umbrellas protesters carried for protection from tear gas.<sup>273</sup> This title helps provide an image for people to remember these demonstrations for a stronger sense of cohesion during the tense conditions from which it arose. On what appears to be an official page managed by one of the main groups, there is a statement of purpose: “Activists are angry about a decision by China to screen candidates for Hong Kong’s 2017 leadership election. They want direct talks with Beijing”.<sup>274</sup> In this case, the *Umbrella Revolution* may be a misnomer as the people were just demanding a proper democratic process for reform and there was no indication to remove the government. The rest of China also did not care much for this issue which was centralized in Hong Kong.

The major point of contention does not even really deal with a governmental problem but rather an agreement established when the United Kingdom ceded Hong Kong to Mainland China. The screening of political candidates by mainland China could be seen as a violation of the Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

<sup>272</sup> Forrest Robinette, “Beijing must grant Hong Kong the democracy its people were promised.” last modified October 7, 2014. from <https://commons.trincoll.edu/tripod/2014/10/07/beijing-must-grant-hong-kong-the-democracy-its-people-were-promised/>

<sup>273</sup> “Beijing must grant Hong Kong the democracy its people were promised.”

<sup>274</sup> CY Leung, “Occupy Central with Love and Peace,” *Wordpress* online, last modified November 10, 2014. from <http://oclphkenglish.wordpress.com/2014/11/10/hong-kong-protesters-carry-out-yellow-ribbon-march/>

and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the question of Hong Kong also known as the Sino-British Joint Declaration.<sup>275</sup> In section three part two, the following is mentioned:

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be directly under the authority of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign and defence affairs which are the responsibilities of the Central People's Government.<sup>276</sup>

Hong Kong's unique socio-political position leaves it nestled between the PRC and this agreement set forth in the past. The agreement went into effect as of July 1st, 1997 and was intended be honored by the government of China up until 2047.<sup>277</sup>

This agreement is related to a concept which was first developed by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s known as, "One Country, Two Systems".<sup>278</sup> This suggests that the awareness and the desire for a different lifestyle and form of governance that followed democratic principles was already in people's minds since at least the 1980s in Hong Kong. It would then seem that there might be fear in Beijing of this sentiment to spread beyond the scope of Hong Kong's 5 million registered voters.<sup>279</sup> At one point, features of this social movement spread briefly to Macao, a former Portuguese territory, since it also is the only other Special Administrative Region (SAR)

<sup>275</sup> "Joint Declaration of The Government of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong," *Legislation.gov.hk* online, last modified December 19, 1984, from [http://www.legislation.gov.hk/blis\\_ind.nsf/CurAllEngDoc/034B10AF5D3058DB482575EE000EDB9F?OpenDocument](http://www.legislation.gov.hk/blis_ind.nsf/CurAllEngDoc/034B10AF5D3058DB482575EE000EDB9F?OpenDocument).

<sup>276</sup> "Joint Declaration of The Government of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong,"

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Tim Summers, "Democracy in Hong Kong Under 'One Country Two Systems'" last modified December 7, 2014. from <http://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/15758>

<sup>279</sup> "Democracy in Hong Kong Under 'One Country Two Systems'"

in China, they are to be reintegrated in 2049.<sup>280</sup> Images flooded the mainstream media around the world of countless individuals holding their cell phones in the air marching through Hong Kong during the middle of the night.<sup>281</sup>

This type of scene in particular is reminiscent of similar situations that repeated in both in the *Green Movement* and the *Arab Spring*, illustrating some sort of archetypal structure that movements operate under when using ICTs. Cell phones tended to be prioritized over other communication methods possibly due to affordability, availability, and connectivity. With cellphone activism there is a risk that the Chinese government may be watching over the people of Hong Kong, but the activists in Hong Kong are keeping an eye on the not so distant PRC. Not long after an impasse took place when protesters refused to depart public spaces, to which protests were broken apart by police as of December 11th, 2014.<sup>282</sup> It was said to officially have ended on December 15, 2014, in total the protests lasted about 79 days.<sup>283</sup> The fact that there is an appeal among a relatively broad group of people that include politicians, a famous media icon, and student leaders, as among the main organizers is an example of what makes this a social movement and not some spontaneous aggregations of people. The numbers of activists

<sup>280</sup> "Joint declaration of the Government of the People's Republic of China and The Government of the Republic of Portugal on the question of Macao," *Bo.io.gov.mo* online, last modified December 20, 1999, from <http://bo.io.gov.mo/bo/I/88/23/dc/en/default.asp>.

<sup>281</sup> Adam Connors, "Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement: A Timeline of Key Events One Year on" last modified September 27, 2015. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-28/timeline-hong-kong-umbrella-movement-one-year-on/6802388>

<sup>282</sup> Danny Lee, Emily Tsang, Phila Siu, Jennifer Ngo, Joyce Ng, Peter So, Alan Yu, Samuel Chan, Clifford Lo, and Timmy Sung, "247 arrested in peaceful end to Hong Kong's Occupy protests after 75 days of turmoil" last modified December 11, 2014. <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1661323/orderly-end-75-days-turmoil>

<sup>283</sup> Lee et al., "247 arrested in peaceful end to Hong Kong's Occupy protests after 75 days of turmoil"

taking to the streets were around 300,000<sup>284</sup> in proportion to the actual population totaling at an estimated 7 million in 2013.<sup>285</sup> This was not a national movement and it did not spread to the mainland.

This desire of protesters to communicate with the government of Beijing spanned the SARs of Hong Kong and Macao at its furthest extent. There was not any indication these sentiments would be shared in the Mainland, thereby impacting governmental sustainability significantly. In Hong Kong there were at least three major groups involved as a part of the mobilization process, and among them are Scholarism led by 17 year-old Joshua Wong, Hong Kong Federation of Students led by 24 year-old Alex Chow along with his associate Lester Shum, and Occupy Central with Love and Peace led by Benny Tai, a law professor from Hong Kong University.<sup>286</sup> This indicates the strong presence of a desire among the youth with at least two major leaders being 17 and 24 years old respectively with the overall structure appearing to be more decentralized compared to other massive *Political Expressionist* movements in the past. People from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds united together under this mutual demand that Hong Kong's people have agency over their own politics and it should not be subject to oversight by the government of China. Both residents of Hong Kong and Macao seemed to fear that mainland China was attempting to strengthen its sphere of influence over the former European possessions.

<sup>284</sup>"In pictures: Tens of thousands take to the streets of Hong Kong," *The National.ae* online, last modified July 14, 2014, <http://www.thenational.ae/world/east-asia/in-pictures-300000-protesters-take-to-the-streets-of-hong-kong>.

<sup>285</sup> "Hong Kong SAR, China," *Worldbank* online, last modified November 9, 2016, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/hong-kong-sar-china>.

<sup>286</sup> Rishi Iyengar, "Occupy Central: An Explainer" last modified October 5, 2014. <http://time.com/3471366/hong-kong-umbrella-revolution-occupy-central-democracy-explainer-6-questions/>

The Umbrella Revolution was, despite the localized nature of its motivations, the largest social movement in China since Tiananmen. Due to the level of spontaneity involved and relatively decentralized organizational structure, the sustainability of this movement seems questionable. Another factor to consider as a driving force is that even though Hong Kong no longer is a possession of the UK, there are many remnants of its influence that in part affected the way people think about how a government should operate. This type of sentiment is different to that of civilians in the mainland. ICTs were an important factor in building up numbers and getting people connected. They even used *Meydan Expressionism* throughout the protests, however, because the appeal of the demands was not widespread and shared by the masses it was eventually dispersed. The protest groups are a minority compared to mainland China and not even around half the country, as in Turkey. Those two cases share the common issue of movement appeal where large segments of the population are not interested in the movement at all, which in turn hampers its capacity as a network of people to effect change. At the same time, were Hong Kong to have a population of 80 million similar to Iran, Egypt and Turkey, proportionally its protesters would amount to around 3 million as well. The Umbrella Revolution even with its localized appeal still managed to make headlines and call attention to an issue that they felt needed to be discussed even if they could not accomplish immediate change.

### **Social Movements with Increased Volatility**

*As more social movements began to follow the trend of Political Expressionism by peaceful means there were others that resulted toward violence. For contrast it is important to consider how violence becomes possible for the movement. Overall, the social movements from*

*the previous discussion were focused on pro-democracy using ICTs as a popular tool for communication and non-violent tactics to achieve their goals. Bahrain shares a similar set of goals to the previous movements, except foreign intervention interfered greatly. They could oust their government with more ease than Tunisia; however, there was a conflict of interest among international powers that led to the suppression of the social movements that ensued.*

Unlike Bahrain, both international intervention and a variety of internal conflicts led to a civil war in Syria despite the original emphasis of the social movements on nonviolence, as well. These are examples of what can happen when outside forces or extreme ideologies interfere in the protest process and the subsequent headlines of violence that follow flooding the airwaves and internet, Syria is a prominent example of this. As a result, Rhizomatic spreading can take on a negative direction where violence begets violence and becomes a venue for the export of such behaviors rather than peaceful, democratic solutions or progress.

## **Bahrain**

Bahrain is smallest nation in the Middle East and to be part of the Arab spring, however, it also has the largest Internet penetration rate by percentage of population. 73% of Bahraini's in 2011 were able to access the internet via subscription, and 93% in 2015.<sup>287</sup> In terms of mobile subscriptions around 131 per 100 people in 2011 were users and this number rose to 185 per 100

<sup>287</sup> "Individuals Using the Internet (% of Population)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-TN-SY-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.



people in 2015.<sup>288</sup> Unlike other countries in the Arab World, the key issue in Bahrain pertained almost exclusively to freedom of expression. The overall objective was to remove the present government in power which belonged to a small number of individuals who maintain control through fraudulent elections. Bahrainis desired free elections that best represented their society's interests and not for those select few in the ruling class. Economics was not at the forefront of the people's interest. The protests or uprisings that took place in Bahrain fits within the elements of a *Political Expressionist* social movement where the role of ICTs were a dominant factor over the course of its development. Most of the protests consisted of a peaceful nature and started with a reformist ideology at its inception. Tensions then escalated, and the Bahraini government sent in their own military forces, military support from Saudi Arabia, and police to suppress protesters, which led to the activists becoming somewhat reactionary even at times they using Molotov cocktails to defend themselves.<sup>289</sup>

Saudi Arabia supported (and continues to support) the Monarchist Sunni minority in control of the government (which were placed in power because of British colonialism), while the Islamic Republic of Iran supported the Shia majority. There were conflicting interests, not just on a regional level, but on an international level, as well. The United States was brought into the conflict because they operate naval bases in the country, which mean that they shared a common interest with Saudi Arabia in supporting the current government. Since the ruling

<sup>288</sup> "Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-SY-TN-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

<sup>289</sup> "Protesters aren't the only Ones throwing Molotov Cocktails – now the Police are," *France 24*, last modified March 20, 2012. <http://observers.france24.com/en/20120320-protesters-throwing-molotov-cocktails-police-bahrain-security-forces-investigation-interior-ministry-firebomb>

family allowed for such activities to be possible, the United States would in turn provide their support.<sup>290</sup>

In an unexpected turn of events it seemed that social media was used as a way to track and identify protesters as stated in, “Social Media, Surveillance and Social Control in the Bahrain Uprising” published by the University of Durham.<sup>291</sup> The authors argued that the same images which illustrated people taking to the streets in massive numbers could be viewed by authorities and used as a means to warrant arrests.<sup>292 293</sup> This led to a dichotomy of “empowerment and control.”<sup>294</sup> People felt empowered on one end but the same digital tools that enabled them to be heard could lead to mass arrest; this serves as a reminder that ICTs need to be used with caution and discretion. At times, activists had to search through their Facebook friend lists and remove people who may spy on them or would be upset or endangered by photos and rhetoric supporting the uprising.<sup>295</sup> This journal also makes reference to *Heterotopia* as a safe space to organize dissent.<sup>296</sup> The social movement in Bahrain was too short-lived for a *real* democracy to be established. Two years following the uprising, in Bahrain a Tamarod (rebellion) group ran a petition campaign that gathered thousands of signatures. It seemed to emulate a similar signature gathering processes to those in Egypt and Tunisia This is an example of the Rhizomatic spreading of a social movement’s component parts, as I have shown this sort of activity took place in at least two times in other countries before Bahrain.

<sup>290</sup> Monshipouri and Assareh, "The new Middle East and the United States," 133.

<sup>291</sup> Marc Owen Jones, "Social media, surveillance and social control in the Bahrain uprising," *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 9, no. 2 (2013): 85.

<sup>292</sup> Jones, "Social media, surveillance and social control in the Bahrain uprising," 85.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid. 85.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid. 84.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

Bahrain appears to have optimal conditions for the usage of ICTs to organize resistance. The problem in Bahrain is outside interests took precedence over the people's voice. The history behind social movements in Bahrain is not as extensive compared to other recent *Political Expressionist* social movements, nor was there interest in a secular democracy the dominant issue. There may not be a long tradition of social unrest in Bahrain, yet it was evident there was a very strong drive for civilians to change the way they were to be governed. The major problems in Bahrain were outside interests, the rise in violence, and the lack of security in social media communication.

## Syria

In 2011 the Internet penetration rates in Syria were rated at 23% and rose to 30% by 2015.<sup>297</sup> As for mobile subscription the rates were around 59 per 100 people in 2011 rising to 64% in 2015.<sup>298</sup> Unrest in Syria also began to manifest in March of 2011. People took to the streets protesting against government corruption and poor economic conditions. However, their initially non-violent approach was met with aggressive actions of brutal suppression on behalf of Bashar al-Assad's government. It is also likely that the lack of accessibility to ICTs led to both the somewhat easier suppression by government forces of opposition actors, manipulation by extremist forces, and also higher likelihood of disinformation and propaganda to exist in general

<sup>297</sup> "Individuals Using the Internet (% of Population)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-TN-SY-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

<sup>298</sup> "Mobile Cellular Subscriptions (per 100 People)," *The World Bank* online, last modified January 1, 2017, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?end=2015&locations=EG-IR-SY-TN-TR-HK-BH&start=2009&type=points&view=chart>.

without the option for people to cross-check communications from inside and outside the country.

To a certain extent it may be inferred that lower internet penetration rates could lead to potential increases in volatility and the lack of overall cohesiveness of a social movement. In response to the government's violent retaliation people began to arm themselves and retaliate in a turn of events that made an already chaotic situation much worse. The problem of political and ideological fragmentation was not only an issue for the Syrians and the present regime, but among oppositional partisans, as well. Extremists ranging from IS to other groups took advantage of the chaotic conditions and began to invade and occupy different parts of Syria. In fact, Syria like Bahrain became a point of contention between Saudi Arabia and Iran, but unlike the case of Bahrain, Turkey stepped in with their own cause for intervention concerning their ongoing battles with the Kurds and other extremists. The continuing civil conflict also matured into a proxy war between the United States and Russia. This was probably one of the worst outcomes thus far of the Arab Spring uprisings, showing how the Rhizomatic spread of a social movement can sometimes follow a negative and unpredictable direction.

The current situation not only led to a massive exodus of Syrians from the civil war but a large amount of controversy on an international level. This conflict continues to make headlines across the world whether about IS or the massive migrations into Turkey and ultimately Europe. As of this writing, it remains unclear as to what should be expected in the near future, since conditions are dire and difficult to keep track of in ways never before witnessed in recent history. Among one of the most bizarre results was ISIS' formation of a fake passport industry based on

stolen documents within Syrian territory.<sup>299</sup> Furthermore, ISIS' successful exportation of violence through social media and expansion as a movement was alarming. This incident calls into question the overall authenticity of almost any migrant's personal documents from that point forward, making it even more difficult than it would normally be for migrants to seek asylum. An estimated 1.3 million Syrians petitioned for asylum in Europe during 2015.<sup>300</sup> According to Amnesty International around 13.5 million Syrians were displaced.<sup>301</sup>

ICTs in Syria led to a set of mixed results, including the rise of the "Syrian Electronic Army" bent on reacting to almost any form of dissidence online and executing different types of pro-regime campaigns. Their range of influence includes denial of service attacks (DDoS). The activities of this group were widespread enough that Bashar-al Assad thanked them in one of his speeches. The exact nature of their relationship to Assad remains a mystery but their role is possibly similar to how the Cyber Army of Iran maintains an ambiguous connection with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Assad's government even consulted Iran's government on ways to use Social media to track people who disagree with the government's views.<sup>302</sup>

At the moment, it seems that most media coming out of Syria shows the atrocities taking place and the expansion of the terrorist network IS. IS is using social media as a way to gain

<sup>299</sup> Julian Robinson, "ISIS have created an entire fake passport 'industry' using documents stolen in Iraq, Libya and Syria, warn French officials" last modified January 26, 2016.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3416967/ISIS-created-entire-fake-passport-industry-using-documents-stolen-Iraq-Libya-Syria-warn-French-officials.html>

<sup>300</sup> Phillip Connor, "Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015" last modified August 2, 2016. Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>

<sup>301</sup> "Syria's refugee crisis in numbers," *Amnesty International* online, last modified February 3, 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/02/syrias-refugee-crisis-in-numbers/>.

<sup>302</sup> Mark Hosenball, "Iran helping Assad to put down protests: officials" last modified March 23, 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-syria-crackdown-idUSBRE82M18220120323>

recruits and advertise itself to the world. This is likely one of the worst chain of consequences to follow and uprising since the dawn of the *Arab Spring*, illustrating with clarity the effect of how a social movement with pro-democratic goals, was manipulated by extremists to suit their means. To a lesser extent this happened with the Muslim Brotherhood take over in Egypt but the level of violence there was nowhere near as extreme. Even in Egypt the military was able to remove the Muslim Brotherhood from power, however this was not the case with Syria.

Even in the midst of a civil war there are Syrians for or against the regime, for pro-democracy or for extremism. The overall cohesiveness of the people who banded together against Assad was not as strong as Iran, Tunisia, Egypt, or Turkey to name a few examples. There is almost as much infighting within Syria as there is opposition to the government. The goal for democracy seems distant as different extremist factions took hold of large parts of the country. It would appear that as a result, the more negative potential of ICTs came into fruition. As mentioned earlier, these same tools that can be used to create spaces for democratic expression can be utilized to control and influence society in negative ways. The Rhizomatic spread of what began as non-violent resistance was overtaken by an extremist revolution rather than a cohesive social movement dedicated to establishing a pro-democratic Syria. This civil war is perhaps one of the worst in recent history where not much substantive action was taken to resolve the many issues that sprung forth in Syria over the past several years.

## **Summation**

In evaluating these Tunisian, Egyptian, Turkish, and Hong Kong-based social movements that have sprung forth since the *Green Movement*, it becomes evident there are at least a few

areas that are shared in common: massive numbers, emphasis on nonviolence, *Meydan* *Expressionism*, and the usage of ICTs. Reasons as to why the strength of each respective movement diminished tended to vary on the strength of the goal set forth by a given social movement and whether or not it was able to accomplish a broad enough appeal but not so vague to the point of losing interest.

It remains to be seen as to how the situations in Syria will stabilize and it is worth noting that they had the lowest Internet penetration rates. Also, very little research was done to evaluate the relationship between ICTs and social movements in Syria. To date, it seems these nations have become overtaken with violence and grown very distant from the original ideals of the *Arab Spring*. As for Bahrain, the civilians remain under tight control of a government which they do not want in power. The results varied a lot from country to country in terms of the consequences that followed what began as peaceful protests. However, there seems to be a stable trend of higher accessibility to ICTs allowing for social movements to mobilize in massive numbers so long as there were strong socio-political foundations. As for foreign intervention, the consequences almost always resulted with unwanted changes and increased volatility.

Based on the available material, it would seem ICTs were an important factor in transmitting information but served more to amplify the goals of a social movement that form offline rather than as a sole catalyst. The usefulness of ICTs is contingent upon the strength of the cause wherein enough socio-political pressure will influence people to mobilize in ways that were formerly impossible, ultimately the results or success of a given movement lay in the people's motivation to succeed. More work still needs to be done in the fields of social and political science as far as expanding beyond the nation-by-nation approach and finding relevant

patterns and trends to identify more concrete sources of driving forces rather than general estimations.



## CHAPTER 6:

### ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY AND INTERVIEW TRENDS

#### Methodologies

The past few chapters reviewed different aspects of the *Green Movement* and social movement manifestations that took place afterward. Information available to the public about the *Green Movement* and *18 Tir* is restricted in a number of ways, part overlooking the more personal experience but also difficulty in being able to organize a more directed approach at obtaining information from the participants themselves. The overall direction and areas of emphasis by this study was derived from prevailing themes that formed over the course of discussions with participants along with my personal experiences in the formation, maintenance, and direction of social movements. The purpose of conducting surveys and interviews with participants in this study was to gain a deeper, more directed understanding of the lesser known aspects of the *18 Tir* and the *Green Movements* on a more intricate level. Public data has its own complications due to large amounts of censorship and disinformation from within and outside of Iran. In general, there are obstacles complicating the process of gathering reliable data about most events which take place in the Middle East because of internal conflicts within nations and language barriers. It does not help that journalists were banned from covering protests in Iran during the *Green Movement* in 2009,<sup>303</sup> which was an additional hindrance to publishing accurate information about the *Green Movement*. Both the direction of this study and more specific

<sup>303</sup> Sohrabi-Haghighat and Mansouri. "Where is my vote?," 28.

insights from personal perspectives were made possible because the participants presented with more clarity on these already very complex social movements.

I used my experience as a social movement leader, socio-linguistic knowledge, and connections to a diverse range of contacts to obtain reliable information and direction when sifting through the available material about social movements in the Middle East, in particular the *Green Movement* and *18 Tir*. Efforts were made to select from a diverse a pool of individuals from the *Green Movement* and *18 Tir*; participants from both rural and urban parts of Iran include activists, observers, reformists, current and former political prisoners, politicians, relatives of victims from government violence, business people, and academics, among others. Such a diverse range of participants were interviewed through my personal contacts and snowballed through random sampling techniques for this work to be carried out in the most objective way possible. The data collected for this section used a set of both qualitative and quantitative comprehensive measures.

I communicated with most respondents over phone lines, mobile apps, online, and harder to reach respondents were contacted through third parties like their family members or mutual friends. Participants were Iranians from the United States, Europe and Iran. I could not travel to Iran myself since I have been blacklisted because of my previous political activities supporting secular democracy during *18 Tir*. An emphasis was made on collecting data from people who currently reside within Iran, in particular the urban sectors, and those who were involved with the *Green Movement* since that information seems to be the most recent and relevant.

A major point of interest as an activist myself involves a better understanding of the relationship between ICTs and TCMs, and how the relationship between activities taking place

both online and offline further a movement's cause of action and objectives. In speaking with many participants in the *Green Movement*, most expressed that social media usage seems to be increasing. I personally observed this with the rise of applications such as Telegram Viber, Imo becoming popularized as a way to communicate within and outside of Iran. It also further blurs the line between usage of the web and mobile devices since they are mobile apps which use internet connections for users to communicate. Because of this fact, I was interested in investigating further the relationship between access to mobile devices and the World Wide Web, wherein, I argue, it seems the two statistics overlap and enrich each other, calling into question the methodology behind the gathering of those statistics themselves.

The ratio of interaction between online and offline activity became a focal point of this process to evaluate the cultural impact of ICTs and led to the development of an entire chapter dedicated to this topic. Originally, there was a plan to include more material from the surveys and interviews themselves but in the end I ended up redacting this data for security related reasons. Names of participants were kept anonymous, and responses that could not be traced to the individuals who made them were analyzed. Other risks included the issue of third party monitoring phone calls and other correspondence. In consideration of such security risks, the safety of participants was a priority and this study places more emphasis on the key trends derived from the collected material.

In forming the questions, I made sure to see what appeared to be absent in the mainstream literature or not discussed in enough detail in other places. They were designed to be brief for the number of participants to be the highest possible with a low rate of withdrawal. Initially, 450 cross-sectional surveys were dispersed in addition to forty interviews being conducted from

across various strata within the *Green Movement* and *18 Tir* for intergenerational contrast. Four hundred and seven people responded for the survey and thirty-four interviews were conducted. Efforts were made for the questions to be brief yet concise enough to obtain responses with enough detail to be analyzed in this study.

Mobile devices were demonstrated to change the way participants stayed connected, redefining the use of public space across literature, media, and responses to survey and interview questions. The amount of time and for what purpose these devices served was considered as part of this evaluation. The usage of the World Wide Web was around 5 hours or less among 89% of *Green Movement* participants, further validating this new type of relationship which is not strictly behind a computer but further enriched by the increased availability and affordability of mobile handsets. This portion of the study demonstrates a remaining widespread discrepancy within the world of social movement analysis requiring this field to be more inclusive of the perspectives of social movement participants. Such information is rapidly dissipating and more difficult to keep track of in the case of *Digital Content Temporality*, since social media content cannot be archived like traditional web pages, as stated earlier. This means future research must be done as soon as possible before important aspects of human history are lost or become even more difficult to research.

Internal perspectives for the most part remain absent from mainstream academic literature and media discussions about social movements. The most recurring or unique aspects of the results are presented in this section. The two following sections will evaluate general trends found to be present both in responses to the surveys and interviews themselves. Generally, it would seem there is a trend toward the rise of ICT dependence, though as to what consequences

will follow as a result remains to be determined. As established in Chapter 4, the massive increase in the global user base of the World Wide Web is changing how it operates as a medium. It remains unclear as to how shifts in usage away from mediums popular in 2009 could make a difference in the current day and age. More than finding answers, this section aimed to come across the proper questions to guide my research and the future endeavors of those who wish to enrich the study of social movement science.

### **General Trends from the Survey**

Four hundred and seven participants responded to the survey whereby people involved with the *Green Movement* were around 68% or 277 individuals, *18 Tir* were 7% or 28 and other movements at 25% or 102. The most common age groups were less than 25 at 35%, between 25-35 around 42%, between 35-40 around 14% and over 50 around 9%. The higher proportion of people were under the age of 35 at 77%. Seventy-two percent did not have children and the participants that did were around 28%. Among all participants, around 55% answered that they were not students, and 45% answered that they were students. These facts indicate the shift of interest in making tangible change possible in Iran toward younger generations. There are visible signs of the intergenerational struggle for change and from within a diverse range of origins whether students or non-students. In effect there are younger people and more inclusivity of those who are not students. This seems to align on some level with what was described in mainstream media.

Most respondents in this survey are of the younger generation similar to what is described in academic and mainstream data. There also appeared to be a shift towards a broader

demographic of activists and participants. Two hundred and twenty-four respondents reported as non-students is a relatively large number indicating a trend of expanding interest among the people involved. This reflects the changes taking place within Iran and how the pressures of living under the Islamic Republic of Iran reaches groups that in the past were not as likely to be involved.

### ***18 Tir***

Among the 28 respondents from *18 Tir*, 12% used landline phones as their major source of communication or staying informed at 35% from radios, 15% through television, 8% through Fax, and 30% through print. This is a significant factor to consider because it appears the World Wide Web managed to consolidate of all these sources. It was interesting to see how print was at 30% indicating a significant role during *18 Tir*. Telephone usage seemed lower than expected, likely because it was not secure; whereas, print can be distributed for the most part in person or anonymously, and phone calls could easily be tracked or intercepted. Fax usage was the lowest according to my respondents perhaps because the resource's availability was not widespread and likely too complicated when trying to get enough people connected and interested.

In my experience, these sources would help supplement the gatherings in person but not replace the goal of the meetings themselves. Similarly, this would likely hold true after the rise of ICTs serving in more of a supplementary role, rather than serve as a point of initiation. In effect, it could be argued whether *18 Tir* or the *Green Movement* offline events led to the use of mediums to help collaborate and connect but did not replace the call to action itself. I would argue that while ICTs help aid in the facilitation of gatherings they do not replace the gatherings

themselves but rather function as a space for expression of ideas with less risk of punishment compared to gathering in public.

### **The *Green Movement***

When looking to the overall daily usage of the World Wide Web among the *Green Movement's* 277 participants, for 3 hours or less it totaled at 32%, between 3 to 5 hours at 37%, between 5 to 10 hours at around 10% and over 10 hours at 1%. For 5 hours or less 89% of respondents were active online daily. Their main reasons for using the World Wide Web varied, 64% used it to participate in the movement, 10% to organize for the movement, the rest was for staying in touch with family and friends at 14%, recreation at 10%, and education 2%. Organization and participation took up the majority of the usage during that time at around 74%. Facebook was used the most by 41% of respondents, Twitter at 14%, Blogging web pages 28%, YouTube 11%, and none at 6%.

The more prevalent type of usage was Facebook and blogging pages combined at a total near 70%. It seems that blogging-type web pages were slightly higher in usage demonstrating that those forms of publication were valued more for sharing their ideas as opposed to Twitter and YouTube. Twitter and YouTube appear to serve a different purpose which elicits a more passive interaction where people use those pages to stay informed but not all are necessarily tweeting and uploading videos. There were a lot of researchers who believed YouTube and Twitter usage is significant, however, these results indicate they were not the only sources of activity. Videos were said to appear slowly due to throttling, tweets were viewed as more useful for key events as they were limited to a certain number of characters per post.

Blogs or Facebook pages are more comprehensive in terms of amount of written material which can be posted, loaded faster and are a convenient resource for sharing information longer than a Tweet and too detailed to be uploaded as a video. All these sources still are more reliable than trying to run a personal web page kept online by an Internet hosting company within Iran as it is subject to strict regulation and private account details to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The lower usage of Twitter is indicative of the tendency for change, somewhat surprising but at the same time is understandable given that people are transitioning to more convenient mobile app usage. Phone calls and personal messages cannot be communicated in Twitter the same way which is possible under mobile messaging applications.

When considering the types of communication methods that were popular during the *Green Movement*, the use of SMS and Mobile phone calls ranked at 30% and 35%. Chat services and E-mails totaled at 19% and 12%, respectively. The high proportion of mobile device usage which resulted at 65% could be a sign that a fair amount of web data usage could have been conducted through mobile devices. These are general estimates as overlap is very high whereby one could make a call, send an email, and message, all in the same session. What once were very different services are merging in various dimensions to the same device. This data suggests mobile devices are playing an increasingly important role within the usage of ICTs for participants of the *Green Movement* to mobilize and organize. The high proportion of usage for organization and participation at 74% suggests a significant focus on the World Wide Web serving more as a tool for bringing people together instead of being exclusive to personal recreation. As to the type of platforms that were popular, no one major web page dominated over



others since usage was distributed in a fairly proportional way. Should a specific web page or application cease to function, plenty others remain available for steady communication.

Although not as prevalent, Twitter usage based on these statistics often directed people toward blogs, Facebook pages, and YouTube videos among other sources making it an important tool for directing web traffic. Twitter was an important tool for bypassing censorship and keeping people informed during the *Green Movement*'s peak, even if people did not use it as a predominant source of interaction. E-mails were at 19% showing online behaviors are going in a different, more diversified direction, where they were still important but not like other more convenient services via mobile devices. This appears to be a positive sign of the shift toward an Internet less dependent on PCs and laptops where users are operating on a different level with increased access via more affordable and available mobile devices.

### **Interview Trends**

Sixty-five percent of the 34 interview respondents were organizers and another 35% were participants in their respective movements. Twenty-two had a role of influence in comparison to 12 that were just active participants in the social movement itself. When asked if they were still working to make the goals a reality of the social movement they participated in, 45% answered yes, and 55% answered no. In asking about the future of social movements in Iran, 70% of respondents stated that there will be another social movement in Iran. One respondent in particular explained, "With each day that passes life becomes more difficult and the people of Iran will not tolerate this, another social movement will probably happen but not as the *Green Movement*". He further elaborated in our discussion that "Telegram, Viber, and other

applications are making it easier for people to stand together. The question should not be about if there will be another movement but instead ask about when.” This optimism is different to what appears in a lot of written material which attempts to look at the *Green Movement* as though it is finished. It may not be the most active at this moment, at least out in the open, but widespread unrest continues to build.

I witnessed the rise and slowing down of *18 Tir*, but by no means is that over, either. The *Green Movement* built upon many principles from *18 Tir* and managed to gather much more international attention. It appears they are building onto each other and categorical or mechanical analyses risks the possibility of overlooking this reality. Even though *18 Tir* was from a time where ICTs were not prevalent, many sentiments, slogans, ideologies, the emphasis on peaceful resistance transferred over into the *Green Movement*. Based on personal experience and information collected thus far, it is very likely another movement will arise when the people see it appropriate to continue the legacies of *18 Tir* and the *Green Movement*. Different reminders continue to appear with the passing of time where people will wear Green or make comments against the system out in public to the surprise of government officials. The politics of fun remains as an ongoing form of contention; it may be more gradual compared to manifestations on the street but messages are made known to the public on a more regular basis, motivating them to not remain idle and continue resisting no matter how minuscule certain actions may seem.

By comparison, about 20% of respondents stated the *Green Movement* is still alive and an Iranian reformist approach will work. It is their understanding the government is going in a different direction which eventually will uphold the people’s demands. One participant stated,

“The government cannot change from one day to the next, it would be more productive to have them change gradually to the point of meeting all of the people’s demands.” This reasoning despite its good intentions does not answer the overarching issue of the government’s insistence on the application of Sharia law which goes against basic principles of human rights. It does not matter how many compromises the current government of Iran will make for the people of Iran; if the constitution is not based on secular human rights principles, there always will be conflicts and abuse of civilians.

Ten percent of respondents believed that social movements will not succeed in Iran and people will need to seek other solutions to resolve problems within the current political order. One interviewee said he thinks, “It may be necessary to seek help from outside Iran like the United State’s force to pressure leaders in Iran to step down, the people alone cannot remove this government from power without risking their lives and putting their families in danger.” While external entities may be helpful, millions of Iranians do not agree with the way they are being governed, and if everyone takes a stand in the form of *Meydan Expressionism* they could very well remove the present government from power. However, the issue arises whether a similar outcome to that of Egypt when Mubarak stepped down would occur, whereby other factions of the government or military in Iran may hijack the political system. The people of Iran took a stand by the millions in 2009, and it is only a matter of time before millions more do the same. At this moment it remains unclear what would take place after a successful overthrow, but as the past would indicate, the drive for secular democracy in Iran is strong enough that interference would be less likely to happen.

As to how social media usage in social movements changed in Iran since 2009, 61% answered there was increased usage, 30% answered there was a change in the type of usage, and 9% stated they were not sure what changes are taking place. When asked about the direction of social media usage in Iran, 85% of respondents answered the changes were positive by comparison to 15% who shared negative views. In this regard, a respondent mentioned over the course of our conversation, “The overall changes brought by social media are positive because people have a space to communicate which before was not possible and much more difficult.” She added, “The increased usage of mobile chatting applications makes it easier to communicate nationally and internationally, with reduced costs and increased speeds.” This is further indication of the types of changes in the landscape of mobile device usage where at one point it was Twitter, SMS, e-mail and now has become much more complex. While people must still be careful, it is more difficult to be tracked especially with large numbers of people using these services at once since it can be overwhelming for the government or corporate officials who seek to keep track of all data being transmitted and received.

When asked if the main reason for unrest during the *Green Movement* was economic strife, 90% answered no and 10% answered yes. As for today’s economic conditions, respondents that believed economics were the main reason for people’s unrest was 45% yes, and 55% answered no. One participant added, “If people continue to have problems with access to medical supplies and food, millions more people will be taking to the streets because it is not just their nation which is at risk but their survival as well”. Since there continues to be an abuse of power in terms of the government’s economic policies, it is only a matter of time before people will not be able to continue living under worsening conditions. The problem lies in whether

sanctions are eased or not, the government prevents the people from being able to gain relief.

The purpose of the multilateral sanctions are to pressure the government into changing and to not affect the civilian, which in this case seems to be happening on a regular and more pronounced basis as time passes.

Another interviewee from the labor movement argued instead that, “The only way for the people to accomplish change is if unemployment reaches a level to which it is unbearable and will be the main focus over political and cultural reasons.” With the trend headed more toward people looking to economics as a source of unrest this possibility is more likely now than in 2009. Another possibility was shared by a person from the women’s movement who commented, “Women’s rights in Iran must be a point of interest, because only then will it be possible for human rights to be respected in their entirety.” This is a point of interest as it emphasizes attention on the rights of women who are systematically targeted by the current government under Sharia law. It highlights the problem of reformist attitudes that do not focus on removing Sharia law from the constitution, and this interviewee believes by focusing more on the rights of women who suffer much more than men under this regime then everyone’s rights will be respected as well. Ultimately, the majority of opinions on this subject share the common goal to respect basic secular, human rights principles where tangible change will be possible if people work together from different areas of politics, economics, labor, and women’s rights, among other schools of thought. It is in this way people can enrich the cause with various perspectives and ideas to be more productive in being able to accomplish the desired change of removing the current regime.

When the respondents were asked about the current human rights situation in Iran and whether the human rights conditions have a real chance for improvement, 85% answered no, and 15% answered yes. For those who believed the human rights situation was an abysmal feared for their lives on a daily basis, concerned about what will happen next. Many felt after the *Green Movement* was shut down abruptly it made them feel the current government is very hostile and not a place where human rights are respected. For the 15 % who expressed hope for a real chance for improvement they tended to believe that reformist approaches will help improve the human rights situation even if it is not much at first. The problem with that reasoning is that they are expecting the same government, which kills people for expressing themselves, to not be as extreme. If there are factions within the government of Iran capable of harming people, then it is in direct contradiction with human rights principles and very difficult to negotiate with, unless they relinquish their control.

In evaluating whether similar demands to those of the *Green Movement* spread to other parts of the Middle East rhizomatically, 82% answered yes, and 18% answered no. An activist added, “If it were not for the *Green Movement* the world would not know if it is possible to protest in such large numbers against a very repressive regime.” The person further elaborated, “Because the world witnessed this reality where people can in fact rise up with their lives and those of their families at risk, that this could be possible in other parts of the world.” There may not be direct collaborations like between activists from Otpor! and *April 6* of Egypt, but a trend was set showing if a major social movement can take place in Iran through a combination of ICTs and a strong will for change then it may be possible in other parts of the world.

Respondents were also asked about the role of the *Green Movement's* impact on people's hope for regime change, whereby 80% answered it made them more hopeful and 15% answered it made them less hopeful, and 5% answered that there was no change. For those who believed there is more hope for regime change, they were amazed at the large turnout. An interviewee expressed admiration for this change,

It was the first time I witnessed people taking to the streets by the millions. If you asked me before it happened whether I would expect such a large amount of people to be protesting, my answer would be no. In fact, because of this change I believe that people in Iran and the world now have a lot more hope that one day this regime will no longer be in control and Iran will be free.

The people who were less hopeful were concerned about how the government could easily quash the *Green Movement* and came out attacking protesters in cold blood much like what took place in *18 Tir* in addition to other expressions of resistance.

The more widespread usage of mobile devices in the *Green Movement* seems to suggest that people's access to the internet is significantly higher than what is being reported currently as measured by internet penetration rates. As mentioned earlier, 30% of respondents stated they changed the type of platform they use in order to be consistent with the technological advancements. Since 2009, many new apps released for mobile devices are competing for usage as methods for communication. With these new variations it also becomes more difficult to track digital activities since apps operate differently, and how a civilian is to be monitored would change depending on how they communicate. For example, since a person could make a call, send a text, tweet, post a video, respond to a blog, and message on three different applications, even the most well-trained experts in surveillance will have a difficult time keeping track of all these data transmissions and the nature of those communications.

Additionally, it appears there has been a shift in the reasons for people's unrest toward increasing concerns about the economic conditions perhaps due to pressure brought on by multilateral sanctions on Iran and corrupt fiscal management by the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, this does not detract from the people's growing frustration with the regime; in fact, it likely is fueling more distrust to motivate protests and resistance in the future. A major part of the problem continues to exist where the present constitution remains based on Sharia law making it very difficult, contradictory, and even impossible for real improvements to happen unless a new constitution is created based on secular, democratic, human rights principles.

Among the selected interviewees there seems to be optimism that the *Green Movement* impacted the local and regional atmosphere, which suggests people will want to change or replace the constitution altogether and expect drastic change. Also, since they shared their perceptions of a connection between the *Green Movement* and subsequent social movements, it further validates the idea of Rhizomatic influence at least from the Iranian perspective. The interviewees seem hopeful and are expecting their demands to be met for a different Iran based on human rights principles. The extensive impact of mobile devices also illustrates the extent to which they are embedded into people's daily activities giving life to a daily *Heterotopia* experience. The majority believe the current political system in Iran is inflexible with change demonstrating Sharia law is not the answer and that a constitution based on human rights is what can make real change possible.



## Summation

Certainly, there is a trend toward increased mobile device usage. Unlike many discourses which overemphasize the role of a particular type of platform, it becomes clear that the *Green Movement* is not just some reaction but a well-planned and developed process since it involved a fair amount of offline motives for interaction in addition to online activities. Although it may not be a centralized movement, we see a trend of bypassing traditional forms of communication and giving people a greater potential to communicate. The participant's tendency to not use one source extensively compared to others indicates mindfulness of the fact that most services could be shut down and they need to be prepared to use others. *Political Expressionism* is on the rise because of this interest in usage of various communications methods, making it more complex to determine how people communicate online and offline. The two forms of communication seem to be blending in an increasingly fluid manner where it is becoming a part of people's daily routine. This could be described as drive toward platform independence and an important sign of awareness of the underlying uncertainties about resource dependence. For that reason, day-to-day communication is likely spread out across different methods out of both interest in keeping up with the latest trends but also maintaining privacy in communications. This portion of the study indicates considerable tension remains post *Green Movement* which could likely carry over into the formation of a new movement under a different name. People are still very active in their use of mobile devices and different platforms even more than in 2009, illustrating their continuing resilience and interest in communicating in the most efficient way possible.

## **CHAPTER 7:**

### **FUTURE OF THE *GREEN MOVEMENT* & CONCLUSION**

#### **The Freedom of Expression**

Freedom of expression to date remains suppressed within Iran, as evidenced by the swift actions the Islamic Republic of Iran takes against people who speak out openly against its policies. Criticism of the government is treated as though it is criticism of Islam and therefore a criticism of God. This logic gives the people in power too much control over society, attributing to them a god-like status where almost any act of contestation could then be treated as a crime against the state. In effect religion is used as a front to pursue political gains. People are tired of this contradictory and manipulative political system laden with double standards. It is very frustrating for people in Iran who are fighting for freedom since 1905 and to end up with a theocratic government in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **Obstacles to Democratization**

Democracy and theocracy cannot co-exist since the two concepts contradict each other on multiple levels. This is why reform did not work in the past and did not lead to a progressive future. So long as the Islamic Republic of Iran exists and there is a constitution based on Sharia, many obstacles to democratization will remain because of how it contradicts basic human rights principles. From a practical and procedural standpoint Iran under this regime cannot operate as a full-fledged independent secular democracy. At no stage in recent history is there an example of a theocracy being capable of running a fair and humanitarian democracy.

As a consequence, the ousting of Prime Minister Mossadeqh was a contributing factor to a chain of events that led to the current situation in Iran. This leaves an open question about the possibilities of a different historical path for Iran and the Middle East if this catastrophic event had not happened. There are countless individuals who are suffering from the psychological, social, and physical pains of living within the closed doors of this regime and are struggling with the effects of multilateral sanctions. Even when such restrictions are eased, the regime will profit the most from such surpluses. It is a lose-lose dilemma, the regime does not care for its civilians and outside powers do not see it in their national interests to support human rights causes in Iran. Iranians end up with the burden of living under excessive restrictions with their rights stripped on a continuous basis. At the same time people are resisting to regain their rights, making conflict a daily reality.

On a national and international level, it appears that the priority for democratization in Iran is not high on the global agenda such as what happened with the *Green Movement* in 2009, where majority foreign governments including the United States did not address the human rights violations in Iran at the time. More attention was being placed on the nuclear program rather than the atrocious human rights violations the Islamic Republic of Iran was committing against its own civilians. As a consequence, the people are victims of this continuing and unwavering problem that does not appear to have any short-term solutions. There are a few major areas which could be considered as reasons for why democratization is being obstructed structural conflicts, human rights, and the path toward the Reform or Revolution. These are just a few points of discussion from perhaps countless options, but are important toward opening a dialogue on what exactly is obstructing the path toward democracy in Iran.

## **Structural Conflicts**

The power structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran is ridden with corruption and nepotism for insiders. At the center of the regime is the Supreme Leader higher than any political position because according to the established system of Sharia law he is an indirect representation of God, whose orders are viewed as final and absolute. Because of this, the Supreme Leader has immunity and followers believe he cannot be criticized or questioned. The Islamic Republic cannot exist without the position of a Supreme Leader. All institutions under him are not elected but selected, state media, TV and radio, the Supreme Council of Cyberspace (SCC), military, including some political and economic experts, among others, none of which are held accountable to congress or government. In recent years, radio and television propaganda from the state was being challenged by social media. The government attempts to monopolize communication methods to deny people the freedom of access to different perspectives. However, the scope of control goes far beyond media when politics are involved.

The Guardian Council always has the last word over who can qualify for governmental positions ranging from president to congressman or any other. They are very strict as to the types of people that can be qualified as political candidates for presidency, house of representatives, who among them must be Muslim, of the Shia following (with the exception of five who are religious minorities in the House of Representatives), must believe in the Islamic Republic's system and the Supreme Leader. The Judiciary system is not independent and operates under the Supreme Leader (article 110 describes the power of the Supreme Leader, head of political, military, media, and propaganda).

The Guardian Council has 12 members who run for 6 year terms, 6 must be clerics (all of whom in addition to the heads are appointed directly by the supreme leader), 6 must be non-clerics lawyers with a background in Sharia law (appointed indirectly by the head of judiciary [which is selected by the Supreme Leader] who are then proposed to the majlis [congress] for approval). It shows all 12 are directly or indirectly selected by the Supreme Leader. The Guardian Council adjudicates who can become a candidate for president, congress, and the Assembly of Experts (all members must be clerics, they are supposed to oversee the Supreme Leader's actions and are in charge of selecting the next Supreme Leader). This gives the Supreme Leader power over who will be the next supreme leader indirectly.

The Supreme Leader is head of the army and the Revolutionary Guard. The Revolutionary Guard is very important for hardliners in power and the Supreme Leader because they are more than just a military group. They have their own secret service in society, and their power in the economy is as strong as the government's. Also, the Revolutionary Guard has an important section known as the Basiji (semi-military militia group) who have offices in almost all governmental and educational institutions in addition to rural groups in rural areas, factories, medical institutions, among others to control community and society. Beside the Basiji, the Supreme Leader has representative offices in all universities nationwide.

Many economic institutions are directly under the Supreme Leader and are not held accountable to anyone. Among those organizations the following are included: Headquarters of Khatam Al Anbia (which is the economic section of the Revolutionary Guard), Mustazafan Foundation of Islamic revolution, Astan Quds Razavi, Imam Khomeini Relief foundation, Organization of Endowment and Charity, The Executive Headquarters of Imam's Directive,

Foundation of Fifteenth Khordad, Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation, and others. It shows how extensive the power of the Supreme Leader is over the financial sector and assets under his control and spend without any repercussions. Under this type of management organization there is no transparency, making it very difficult at best for any democratic progress if all the finances are kept secret from the people. Additionally, the system is corrupt influenced and affected a lot by nepotism but moreover because qualifications based on ideologies instead of experience it cannot progress.

### **Reform & Revolution**

Any effort toward achieving democratization needs to go in a direction without the Supreme Leader therefore, if the Supreme Leader exists it is contradictory toward that process. Over the course of eight years of reform under president Khatami since 1997, people also voted for reformist candidates in congress and city councils winning the majority vote but all failed to accomplish most of their goals. The Revolutionary Guard and economic institutions became stronger to support the Supreme Leader and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad becoming president in 2005 resulted from these failures. Because of that, the energy which could be spent toward people trying to accomplish fundamental change was directed at reform instead. Based on the experience and the political structure reform in the Islamic Republic under the Supreme Leader is impossible. The difference between a theocratic and authoritarian regime is that the Supreme Leader in a theocracy is exalted at a higher respect than a dictator but with little to no privacy in the personal lives of civilians; therefore, there exists much more inflexibility toward holding him accountable for his actions or those of the people he commands. Examples of the

Islamic Republic's invasion of people's personal lives include: the monitoring of how civilians dress, whether men or women interact with each other, who a person dances with, what they drink, or the music they listen to among other intrusions. The current situation Iran prevents people from even connecting with each other on a level based on cultural values and global peace instead the Islamic Republic's ideologies are forced onto them.

Many people tried and hoped in Iran for a long time that change would be possible through reform, however, they do not have a free choice for the candidates and therefore will not be able to have a free election.

In Iran there is an ongoing debate about people supporting reform or revolution but as mentioned previously unlike other countries reform is not an option because the government is inflexible with regime change and by its very nature is in direct opposition with the concept of a secular democracy. The problem with reform in Iran is that change can only take place on the most minimal level, were there to be major constitutional alterations the government's structure would then become redefined which is not in the regime's interest.

In recent history most forms of reform or revolution shared the goal of democratization despite taking on different approaches to make it possible. For example, reform toward democratization took place in many countries as with Argentina in 1983, Brazil in 1985, Chile in 1990, Poland in 1989, and South Korea in 1987. By contrast, revolution was used as a way to establish democracies in the Philippines in 1986, Romania in 1989, Tunisia and Egypt in 2011. Based on historical and political factors, social movements are likely an integral factor in the process for democratization. If we did not have social movements like *18 Tir* or the *Green Movement*, then it would be difficult to measure the strong desire for change in Iran. Many

countries which had strong social movements succeed in establishing a path for change like South Korea in 1987, the Philippines in 1989, Tunisia in 2010 and Egypt in 2011. In highlighting these trends, it is evident that Iran will be a strong contender for a social movement to develop that could lead to democratization given the long history and desire of the Iranian people for that type of change. Should another major social movement arise in Iran with the goal of secular democratization in the Islamic Republic of Iran will be at a crossroad where they could end up like South Korea with mediation between them and the opposition as a way to establish a functional democracy or they can end up like Tunisia and Egypt where the regimes did not cooperate at all until they were taken from power. Either way, the Islamic Republic of Iran now faces the inevitable desire of its civilians for nearly 40 years to establish democratization.

### **The Future of Social Movements in Iran and the World**

The *Green Movement* failed to accomplish its initial goals and later its main goal of obtaining a new government based on democracy. But they did bring a refreshed sense of hope and solidarity nationwide with the idea that change is possible. The information collected thus far appears to show the *Green Movement* remains active but on a more dormant level, this does not mean that in the future another major movement will not happen. If the *Green Movement* took place 10 years after *18 Tir* when it appeared all hope was lost, then anything is possible. The *Green Movement* was able to mobilize enough of a broad spectrum of participants inclusive of civilians who were students, from urban areas, and the middle class. But the absence of people from rural, industrial, and the labor class affected the movement adversely. Their part-time participation by going home at night during some of the most massive demonstrations also



slowed down the movement at a time, *Meydan Expressionism* was necessary to accomplish the its main goals.

The key element of success for any social movement to strengthen solidarity is in its inclusiveness for it to gain power from society. But in the *Green Movement* this was not the case because when reformists in particular noticed the movement's shift toward a revolutionary stance was taking place, they tried to limit its capacity by making sure regime change will not happen. A major component of this tactic was for them to attempt to make the *Green Movement* more exclusive to weaken its reach and appeal. That was the reason they tried to show the *Green Movement* is for people who voted, believe in the regime, and believe in the founder of the Islamic Republic (Ruhollah Khomeini). This was the reason why after people were protesting in massive numbers, participation started to dwindle, and the *Green Movement* become more exclusive.

Despite increasing forms of surveillance and negative applications of ICTs, it appears that there also a fair amount of hope in terms the future for social movements in Iran and the Middle East. The sheer availability of applications on mobile devices compared to 2009 is one of the unique changes that makes it difficult in part to track every single person's activities as they are spread out through different venues. This was different from the time when there was just SMS text messaging and almost no data service to connect to the internet.

Not only are there economic losses, but due to the rise in usage of IOTs, there may be damages to society through automated devices dependent on the Internet. This means that any service that requires the Internet, whether electric or otherwise, runs the risk of getting disabled

under the conditions of a shut down. Over the course of several days Egypt lost 90 million<sup>304</sup> U.S. dollars, the effects could be even more catastrophic for Iran, especially because they are under multilateral sanctions and the regime abuses its monetary power.

The other examples of social movements throughout the region and the globe demonstrate how even with slight alterations very unexpected and unbelievable results take place. There is a balance at work, historical, political, and how people relate their space to the state and society. In large part external intervention caused three civil wars to break out in the Middle East and was the reason why Bahrain's social movement stopped before it could accomplish its goals.

The *Green Movement* is well known in the 21st century for the way protesters remained nonviolent even under extremely brutal conditions. It was the first type of social movement based almost entirely on ICTs which mobilized people by the millions and within a regime that has no mercy toward its own civilians. A trend was set for non-violent protests dedicated toward pro-democracy and human rights values. But when this type of thinking gets manipulated or interfered with, it is not invincible and can lead to outcomes often which people did not wish for.

The field of ICTs is evolving at a rate that changes from second to second. Because of this dynamism, political science and social science is trying to play catch up, this study should serve as a framework where researchers can collaborate together and stay up-to-date with what is going on in different regions whether or not a social movement is taking place. Useful information available online, in particular through social media, should be archived as soon as

<sup>304</sup> Matthew J. Schwartz, "Egypt Takes \$90 Million Hit From Internet Blackout" last modified February 3, 2016. <https://www.networkcomputing.com/government/egypt-takes-90-million-hit-Internet-blackout/1271943411>

possible before it gets lost. Much more work is needed to fuel a social movement than just a Facebook page or Twitter feed but the desire for change and people dedicating themselves to turning their dreams into reality.

### **Central Questions**

This research started with two distinct yet equally significant questions “What is the Iranian dream for change, its achievements, and what will be in store for the next chapter of social movements in Iran?” In addition to, “what impact did ICTs have on the conceptualization of space in state and society?” The desire for change represented by millions of Iranians fueled by mounting unrest in large part is caused by the current regime is a theocracy claiming to operate as a democracy. This complicates their hopes for Iranian-style reform as the constitution established in 1979 is incompatible with democracy at the most basic level.

When taking into account the results of my inquiries into the *Green Movement* and *18 Tir* on the participant level it becomes clear that there is a mounting pressure that may result in potential uprisings in the near future. The Iranian dream for change appears to remain unwavering and shifting, and largely contingent upon local and current circumstances. The *Green Movement* left a legacy not only for Iranians but the world. Depending on how long the economy can improve or maintain gains and to what extent the government is able to placate civilians, will determine whether or not an outbreak of protests will take place anytime soon.

As for ICTs the increase in usage is of interest because it is in line with the statistics about mobile devices and how they are used to serve the purposes of connecting and communicating. The trend of mobile device usage to go online was relatively high among the

participants in the survey and present in data gathered through public sources. These new platforms are changing the way civilians protest but also how states exercise censorship and control. *Digital Content Temporality* is reshaping how data is published and in turn how it can be utilized and studied. In general, it seems the current situation of online censorship is less restrictive than times when the state dominated the entire media in the era of TCMs. The *Green Movement* was bestowed with a great opportunity at its inception but unfortunately was not assertive or inclusive enough. It could have accomplished its goals were it to continue under *Meydan Expressionism* rather than recede at night and participate through a strengthened *Co-Optive Expressionism*. If people were to flood social media and the streets, the Iranian Cyber Army and militia will be unable to keep track of everything that is occurring at once. Certain qualities of the Iranian Cyber Army tend to be exaggerated and appear as a propaganda showcase. It seems people in Iran tend to remain hopeful despite the regime's constant fear of a relapse where the *Green Movement* reaches new or greater heights or a new social movement takes its place.

The discourses reviewed throughout this dissertation often lack an overall consensus on theories and data which in turn further impedes the ability of researchers to study social movements. Without an agreed upon framework or set of frameworks it is possible for researchers to fall into the trap of trying to reinvent the wheel rather than focusing upon its use. Most material did not go into detail about the regional and international dynamics at work. Most of the Iran-specific literature also does not discuss in detail the historical and geographical scope of demonstrations within and outside of Iran. Often the transnational component of the *Green*

*Movement* seems to gloss-over but was a very important stage where even Mousavi spoke of solidarity between the protestors and reformers in Iranians, Tunisians and Egyptians.

The use of TCMs by activists seems to be almost absent in most of these discussions where it should be an important element used in conjunction with ICTs. Photos of protestors holding up signs going viral online is an example of one such combination. Another aspect of TCMs is the historical pretext that developed offline prior to the outgrowth of ICTs, if researchers are to look at social movements when they reach a specific peak, it is important to consider the evolution of the process to this point and beyond this we should consider how to measure the spontaneity of uprisings in reality.

During these troubling times, instability seems to be spreading across the Middle East. This research shows that much in the same way that chaos can spread, so too can the demand for peace, justice, and democracy based on human rights principles. In the case of Iran, it is only a matter of time before the people take to the streets again and this time they will likely persist until the changes they desire become a reality not a fantasy. If positive change can happen in Iran, then it is likely to have beneficial effects on the rest of the region. It was not the first time that a Rhizomatic effect took place, nor will it be the last.

I strongly believe future research in this field could be a source for solutions to conflicts not just in Iran but the Middle East, and elsewhere in the world, as well. The *Green Movement* demonstrated that a dialog is possible, which can help maintain higher standards toward building peace based on secular-democratic principles and human rights ideals. This study was a unique opportunity to apply my experience and knowledge to this field with the hope of seeing it bring improvements to all societies. I promise to uphold the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's

commitment to excellence by using the Political Science department's investment in me to contribute insights that will benefit scholarly communities and human rights activists alike between the East and the West.

## **Recent Uprisings**

### **The Current State of the World Wide Web**

The conditions are very unstable at best. As predicted net neutrality regulations would become a major issue at the forefront with Ajit Pai spearheading the move toward bringing them to an end. Furthermore, it seems that the continued usage of algorithms by Facebook and Twitter that determine what posts their users view, is highly questionable, at best. The recent controversy over “Fake News’ gives algorithms more control over which content is displayed, meaning legitimate news could end up being censored either by mistake or on purpose.<sup>305</sup>

It has been recently indicated that Facebook’s algorithm has many flaws.<sup>306</sup> This is an ongoing problem yet it is being treated as though it is a recent problem in reaction to the ‘Fake News’ issue. India in February 2018 filed suit against Google for \$21 million in damages due to the manipulation of search results.<sup>307</sup> The more control that is put in the power of sole companies, the easier it is for them to alter the flow of information and subject it to pressure from governments. In effect the real time component of online media is becoming a figment of

<sup>305</sup> Alexandre Alaphillipe, “Facebook’s News Feed changes are probably going to be great for fake news” last modified January 18, 2018. <https://thenextweb.com/contributors/2018/01/18/facebooks-news-feed-changes-probably-going-great-fake-news/>

<sup>306</sup> Alaphillipe, “Facebook’s News Feed changes are probably going to be great for fake news”.

<sup>307</sup> “India imposes \$21 million fine on Google for search bias,” *Jurist* online, last modified February 8, 2018, <http://www.jurist.org/paperchase/2018/02/india-imposes-21-million-fine-on-google-for-search-bias.php>.

the past. The overabundance of information also turns into *de facto* censorship where the truth gets pushed out by lies and algorithms that can be modified to suit political or monetary gains.

What arises is a problematic combination of an increased user base dependent on ICTs, inefficient way of applying algorithms for the sorting of massive amounts of data, the compliance of social media companies with regimes, the tampering with net neutrality, and internet stoppages. This demonstrates that there are more complexities than what would appear at first glance. The tools to share information appear to be the first place governments look to censor in order to silence a social movement.

The free flow of information that was once was a promising, unexplored frontier has transformed into a very different reality. There are many more users of different web-based applications such as Telegram, for the *Green Movement* in Tehran its user base in Iran is now more than 45 million, proving that it is a widespread and vital tool for resistance.<sup>308</sup> This can be a benefit but it is also problematic because the internet shuts down, this access as a means of communication for almost 50% of the country can be denied, as well.<sup>309</sup>

Currently, more information is being transmitted than ever before not just within Iran, but worldwide. This means, that from this point forward it will be difficult to reach the mainstream media with everything that is flooding information pathways. This was evident when the December 2017 protests began it took days to even reach the mainstream media. Upon getting to that stage inaccurate and very passive coverage followed. The internet was shut down at a very early stage, it did not deter protests, which harmed the ability for people nationally and

<sup>308</sup> “Digital Marketing in Iran,” *Sisarv* online, last modified May 2017, <http://sisarv.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Digital-Marketing-in-Iran-Q1-2017.pdf>

<sup>309</sup> “Digital Marketing in Iran.”

internationally to obtain information. It seems that Telegram was shut down for at least two weeks when the December 2017 protests were most active.

A new type of uprising in Iran started from Mashhad December 28, 2017 bearing different characteristics compared to previous movements. Specifically, these movements were composed of labor-class participants and more spread out across the country.<sup>310</sup> 18 Tir and the *Green Movement*, which were based more on university-educated students and the middle class. Geographically, these two social movements were not as spread out either, even the *Green Movement* despite massive numbers only manifested in select major cities in urban areas. A shift in behavior where the current uprisings had spread out much further across the nation, began in Mashhad the secondary capital of Iran which was experiencing record high gaps between rich and poor, with a high youth unemployment rate of 60%.<sup>311</sup> People took to the streets expressing themselves loud and clear from its inception compared to the majority silent protests of the *Green Movement* during its peak. It was the first time that early-on and nationwide there were chants for the Supreme Leader to step down while demanding democracy and freedom. Instead of starting out with “Where is my Vote?” like the *Green Movement*, their sentiment was more along the lines of “Where is my Country?” This time events took place in more rural areas among more working-class individuals. December 17 was more vocal compared to the *Green Movement* with people’s displeasure with the entire system, calling for its dissolution.

<sup>310</sup> Nasser Karimi and Amir Vahdat, “On the Streets of Tehran, Iranians Feel Protesters’ Pain” last modified January 8, 2018, <https://www.apnews.com/fa8014d978f547e48f1568504b0b3ddd/On-the-streets-of-Tehran,-Iranians-feel-protesters%27-pain>.

<sup>311</sup> Thomas Erdbrink, “Scattered Protests Erupt in Iran Over Economic Woes” last modified December 29, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/29/world/middleeast/scattered-protests-erupt-in-iran-over-economic-woes.html>



The Speaker of the Judiciary system in Iran is known to have stated 25 people died over the course of the December 2017 Uprisings.<sup>312</sup> The number is likely much higher than projected. Furthermore, additional contradictory information where Amnesty international reports were around 1,000 detained, many of whom facing the death penalty.<sup>313</sup> By comparison the BBC Persian congressman Alireza Rahimi, was quoted as saying around 4,972 were imprisoned with several hundred who still remain incarcerated.<sup>314</sup> Previous estimations of internet usage back in May 2017 included estimates that Telegram and Instagram were the top messaging platforms of choice.<sup>315</sup> Both were blocked by the regime during the protests.<sup>316</sup> Telegram in Iran consumes around 40% of total bandwidth and has about 45 million users in Iran.<sup>317</sup> When Telegram was shut down for at least 2 weeks.<sup>318</sup> It is unclear how long Instagram and the World Wide Web was shut down. What is more than certain is that the World Wide Web was cut off in several cities.<sup>319</sup> This calls into question the role of outside third parties and being able to respond to these issues

<sup>312</sup> “,تن در خیابان کشته شدند, ۲۵ آخرین آمار کشته شدگان در تظاهرات؛ سخنگوی قوه قضائیه:” *Radio Farda* online, last modified January 14, 2018.

[https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran\\_judiciary\\_mohseni\\_ezhei\\_protests/28974896.html](https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran_judiciary_mohseni_ezhei_protests/28974896.html)

<sup>313</sup> “Iran protests: 1,000 demonstrators are now at risk of torture,” *Amnesty International UK* online, last modified January 4, 2018,

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/iran-protests-1000-demonstrators-are-now-risk-torture>.

<sup>314</sup> “نزدیک پنج هزار نفر در اعتراضات دی ماه بازداشت شدند,” *BBC Persian* online, last modified February 2, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-42920679>.

<sup>315</sup> “Digital Marketing in Iran.”

<sup>316</sup> Marcus Gilmer, “Instagram, Telegram Blocked in Iran Due to Anti-Government Protests” last modified December 31, 2017, <https://mashable.com/2017/12/31/iran-telegram-instagram-protests/>.

<sup>317</sup> “Digital Marketing in Iran”,

<sup>318</sup> “Iran unblocks Telegram messenger service shut down during country-wide protests,” *DW* online, last modified January 14, 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/iran-unblocks-telegram-messenger-service-shut-down-during-country-wide-protests/a-42141829>

<sup>319</sup> Daa Nasser, “Iran cuts off internet access in several cities as mass protests continue” last modified December 31, 2018. <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2017/12/31/Iran-cuts-off-Internet-service-in-several-cities-as-mass-protests-erupt.html>

by providing alternate forms of internet access or not being complicit with shutdown of their mobile app services. There is a clear link between the economic sanctions and accessibility to the World Wide Web outside of state-run internet connections.<sup>320</sup> An unfortunate consequence of the economic sanctions is the prevention of the Iranian people to have access to digital technologies.<sup>321</sup> This creates a problem where the people of Iran must work with a very limited network, out of the many problems the economic sanctions cause for Iranians this affects their ability to communicate during an uprising, causing it to become much more limited in scope.

The government was quick to use censorship and shutdown the internet in response to these activities. This shift in behavior demonstrates that people are tired of the reformist system in place for over 20 years, yielding no tangible change via reform for the people. It demonstrates a clear incompatibility between this regime and a fully functioning democracy and therefore reform is not possible. It is evident that government spending is self-serving by fueling overseas war operations, rather than helping to build the nation and its people. A major problem which exists with the current uprisings is the lack of support from the middle and academic classes, and the inclusive political spectrum. Furthermore, the oil industry would have to side with the people along with the Bazaris (merchants) many of who were instrumental in major social movements in the past as was true for the Constitutional Revolution in 1905.

These uprisings also took somewhat aggressive turns that did not ultimately help the cause. For a movement to be effective, people need to remain non-violent and win over support from the elites and military forces much like the example earlier of the Otpor!, Jasmine

<sup>320</sup> Elias Groll, "How Washington Helps Tehran Control the Internet" last modified January 4, 2018. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/04/how-washington-helps-tehran-control-the-internet/>

<sup>321</sup> Groll, "How Washington Helps Tehran Control the Internet."

Revolution, and April 6 movement.! Social movements that are able to gain support from law enforcement rather than become confrontational. It is important to bring Iranians from all sectors of society even people from within the regime to defect and support the larger cause of making a secular-democratic Iran based on cultural principals a reality.

In the case of Iran, 18 Tir, the *Green Movement*, and the December 2017 uprisings a trend can be observed where at different stages barriers were broken but not all of the elements for complete success were met, is the ultimate goal being regime change. Different groups of people arose but not all at once, with each movement their approaches changed, and subsequent outcomes varied, as a result. However, they all shared a common goal, a secular democratic-state based on cultural principals, though not in complete unison, therefore, weaker and did not accomplish as much as desired. The following section will break down in more detail the significance of the *Green Movement's* treatment of its micro goals and the resulting accomplishments shy of its macro goal.

When taking a closer look at the *Green Movement* in this context it could not achieve their macro goal, which was to change the election results and government, overall, though they:

- 1.) Brought lots of attention to the world demonstrating the Iranian people's demand for democracy
- 2.) Expressed the intergenerational struggle for respect of human rights and a secular democracy based on cultural principals.
- 3.) Introduced ICTs on a massive global level for the first time incorporated on that scale into social movement.
- 4.) Demonstrated the systematic corruption in Islamic Republic which is based on a Theocratic regime.
- 5.) Brought more hope and possibility for regime change in Iranian and worldwide in other social movements.
- 6.) Its weaknesses could be transformed into strengths by learning what mistakes to avoid, which could be useful for future social movements' goals.

Those sentiments set the stage for the more recent movement in Iran during December 2017 to be possible. It demonstrates that people are becoming economically distressed and enraged by governmental corruption, and thus, wanted to change the regime. Unlike the *Green Movement*, this time the working-class was much more involved and spread out all over the country. By contrast, the *Green Movement* was based mostly on the middle class in urban areas with large cities like Tehran. Both movements of 2009 and 2017 desired change but went in the direction of peaceful revolution because of the regime's oppressive actions for nearly four decades and the systematic corruption that was incompatible with reform. The 2017 uprisings were vocal against reform and their main focus was peaceful revolution. In 2017, people openly came to the street and chanted against the system as a including both reformists and conservatives, that means the desire for reform is shifting more and more toward revolution.

At this time, the age range was among the youngest age participation and protest in Iran's modern history, showing an increase in unrest.<sup>322</sup> The future of how the politics will play out depends on how the government chooses to respond and how flexible they will be. They can collaborate on removing themselves from power or resist. Another factor to consider when examining the potential of future social movements in Iran is how Iranians choose to work with ICTs and TCMs. Too much dependence on ICTs makes them more vulnerable during internet shutdowns. Two weeks without Telegram took a toll on the nation. The opposition also needs bring in more solidarity through inclusivity to gain participants from all different classes and region to participate.

<sup>322</sup>“Iran protests,” *Thomson Reuters* online, last modified January 5, 2018, <http://fingfx.thomsonreuters.com/gfx/rngs/IRAN-RALLIES/0100608R0KT/index.html>

At this point, bridges need to be made between the working class, the middle class, university students, and all other groups of people within the country interested in working toward accomplishing the macro goal of removing the regime. This also includes supporting related movements especially between Student movements, labor movements and women's movements. It is important that there be support for resistance among people from the energy sector, among Bazaris, and political fields, both. By forming these stronger bonds, future social movements will be much more cohesive and able to deal with most potential challenges to its structure.

It is very important for the opposition to gain the trust of Iranian citizens based of national interest and through nonviolent resistance with an emphasis on world peace. It is important to create a secure area or safe zone for the people who work in the Islamic Republic where they can learn that it is in the best interest of the country's future that they stop working for the regime, in particular, the military sectors. The regime's actions are important because it can make the choice to let the people decide how to direct democratic transition like in South Korea or revolutions in the Philippines, Egypt, and Tunisia. As it stands, the current socio-political climate in Iran continues to build pressure, which will likely be the cause of future unrest and more groups of people banded together, as compared to times past. The lack of reliable information and blatant censorship only shows how much more research needs to be done before available materials get lost with the passage of time.

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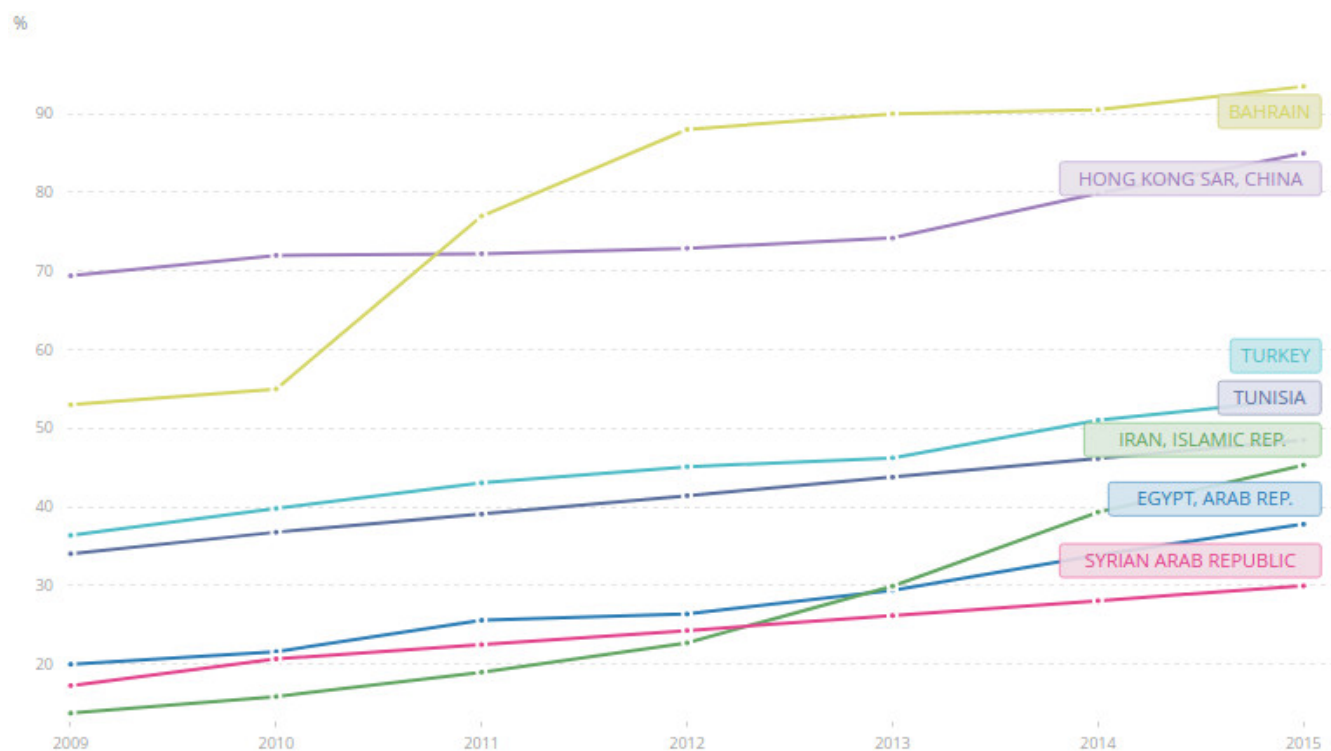
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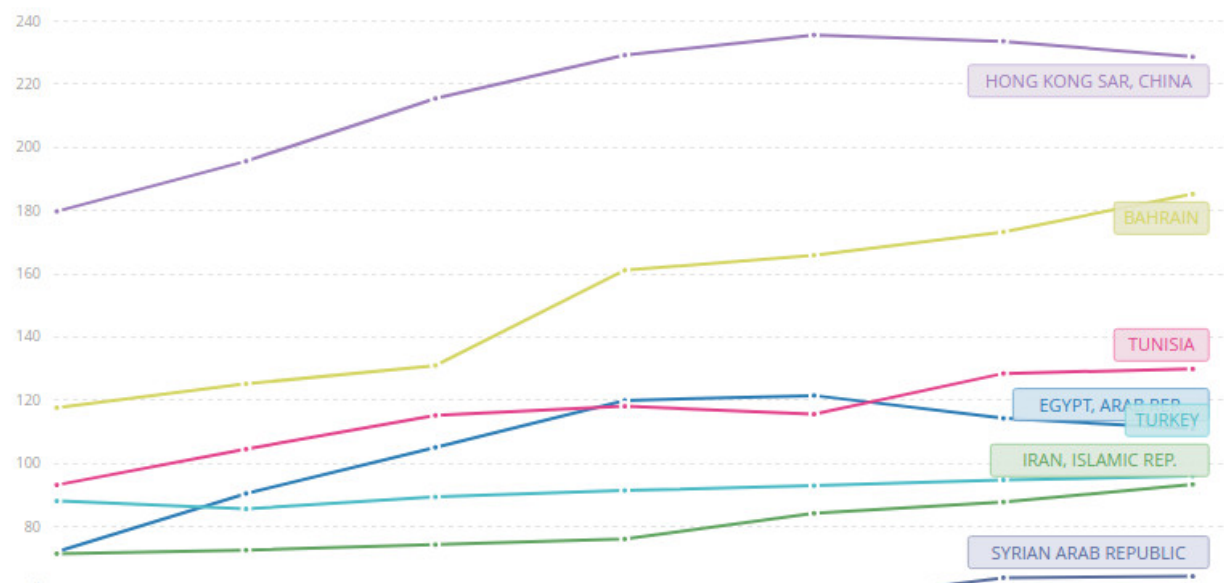
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## APPENDIX

### Internet Penetration Rates- From: data.worldbank.org (by percentage)



### Mobile Subscription Rates – From: data.worldbank.org (per hundred people)



### Survey Trends:

**Total 407 (All Respondents)**

**Question #1**

**What movement you participated in?**

<i>Green Movement</i>	68% (277)
<i>18 Tir</i>	7% (28)
Other Movements	25% (102)

**Total: 407 (All Respondents)**

**Question #2**

**What was your age at the time you were participating in a social movement?**

A) Less than 2	35% (142)
B) 25-35	42% (171)
C) 35-50	14% (57)
D) Over 50	9% (37)

**Total: 407 (All Respondents)**

**Question #3**

**Did you have children during the time of that social movement?**

A) No	72%(293)
B) Yes	28%(114)

**Total: 407**

**Question #4 (All Respondents)**

**Where you a student in at the university during the time of that social movement?**

No	55% (224)
Yes	45%(183)

**Total: 28 (18 Tir Respondents)**

**Question #5**

**What communication method did you use the most during 18 Tir?**

Phone	12% (3)
Radio	35% (10)
TV	15% (4)
Fax	8% (2)
Print	30% (9)

**Total: 277 (*Green Movement* Respondents)**

**Question #6**

**How many hours were you online during the *Green Movement*?**

3 or Less	32% (88)
3-5	57% (158)
5-10	10% (28)
Over 10	1% (3)

**Total: 277 (*Green Movement* Respondents)**

**Question #7**

**What was the purpose of your web page usage during the *Green Movement*?**

Participation	64% (177)
Education	2% (5)
Recreation	10% (28)
Organization	10% (28)
Family/Friends	14% (39)

**Total: 277 (*Green Movement* Respondents)**

**Question #8**

**What type of online communication platform did you use?**

Facebook	41% (114)
Twitter	14% (39)
Blogging	28% (77)
YouTube	11% (30)
None	6% (17)

**Total: 277 (*Green Movement* Respondents)**

**Question #9**

**What types of communication methods did you use the most?**

SMS	30% (84)
Mobile Phone Call	35% (97)
Chat Service	19%(52)
E-mail	12%(33)
None	4%(11)

### Interview Trends:

**Total:34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #1**

**Where you an organizer or supporter of the social movement you participated in?**

Organizer	65% (22)
Supporter	35% (12)

**Total:34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #2 Are you still active in the movement?**

Yes	45% (15)
No	55% (19)

**Total:34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #3**

**What is the future of social movement's in Iran?**

a) There will be another movement	70% (24)
b) <i>Green Movement</i> is still alive, the reform will work.	20% (7)
c) Social movement will not work in Iran and have to look for other solutions	10% (3)

**Total:34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #4**

**How did the role of social media usage in social movements change in Iran since 2009?**

a.) Increased usage	61% (21)
b.) Change of usage	30% (11)
c.) Don't know	9% (3)

**Total:34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #5**

**Increase of social media usage right now in Iran, positive or negative?**

**Negative or positive impact of the usage.**

Positive	85% (29)
Negative	15% (5)

**Total:34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #6**

**In 2009 social media?**

**Usage had a positive or negative impact?**

Positive	88% (30)
Negative	12% (4)



**Total:34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #7**

**Role of economics during the 2009 *Green Movement*, as one of the main reasons for people's unrest?**

Yes	10 % (3)
No	90% (31)

**Total: 34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #8**

**Today, does the economy serve as the main reason for people's unrest?**

Yes, the main reason	45% (15)
No, not the main reason	55% (19)

**Total: 34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #9**

**With the current constitution does the human rights situation have a chance for real improvement?**

Yes	15% (5)
No	85% (29)

**Total: 34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #10**

**Did the demands of the *Green Movement* spread to other parts of the Middle East?**

Yes	82% (28)
No	18% (6)

**Total: 34 (All Respondents)**

**Question #11**

**What was the *Green Movement's* role in creating hope for regime change?**

Made people more hopeful	80% (27)
Made people less hopeful	15% (5)
Didn't change anything	5% (2)